

RECOLLECTIONS  
OF AN  
EQUESTRIAN MANAGER

BY C. W. MONTAGUE



W. & R. CHAMBERS LONDON & EDINBURGH


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CHARLES W. MONTAGUE



W. & R. CHAMBERS  
LONDON AND EDINBURGH  
1881

Edinburgh :  
Printed by W. and R. Chambers.



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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

**T**HERE has been no attempt to adhere to any special plan in the arrangement of the following anecdotes. They are written in almost the same order in which the memories themselves have recurred to mind in moments of leisure ; and that those moments are not too plentiful, must be some excuse for shortcomings.

The aim of the equestrian performer is to amuse and to interest, and that is all : while the actor goes far beyond this ; at one moment splitting our sides with mirth, at another reading us a moral lesson, and at another harrowing our souls with the dread outpourings of the tragic muse. To no such heights as these does the equestrian aspire. If

he amuses, he is content ; and no loftier ambition prompts the writer of these pages, to interest and amuse being his sole desire.

#### EARLY ASSOCIATIONS.

In the great majority of cases, the members of my profession are brought up to it from their childhood, one might almost say from their cradle. For even before the junior members of the company are brought into actual training, they are in many ways absorbing into their nature a strong predilection and aptitude for the pursuits of their parents. But at the same time, our ranks are largely recruited from without by people of various ages, and under circumstances quite as various.

Speaking more particularly of my own early career, I was during my youth entirely unconnected with circus matters ; but I was when quite young brought into frequent contact with horses at my father's extensive stables, and attribute to this circumstance the tastes which afterwards grew upon me. I was born in the City of London, 'within the sound of Bow Bells,' at an ancient hostelry which had been in the possession of our family since the Great Fire of London ; the premises having been built the year after that catastrophe, and pulled down only a few years ago, to make way for local improvements. It was a great coaching-house ; and in addition to that, my father kept a large number of post-horses and vehicles, a branch of which business he also conducted at Reading. I remember well, when a mere lad, watching with particular interest the daily arrival of the Dover mail with its steaming foam-covered team, as it entered the large court-yard of the inn, with its dark

wooden gallery, leading to the many rooms of the straggling premises. It was from this house that the Dover mail started regularly until a few years ago, when the opening of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway rendered its services, even its existence, no longer necessary. So far as I am aware, this was the last mail that ran out of London.

Whether here or at Reading, I was always in the stables—except when at school or in bed—watching and helping the grooms, or tending my favourite horses, which I would feed and caress and occasionally ride about the yard. As I grew up, I not only acquired a thoroughly practical knowledge of the horse, of his ailments and their remedies, of his tempers and how to manage them; but I likewise imbibed a genuine love for that noblest servant of man. In after-years, having been brought into frequent intercourse with many who were connected with circus life, it so fell out that, by the time I was eighteen years of age, I had acquired as great a knowledge of circus matters as some who had followed the calling all their lives.

#### A REMINISCENCE OF ‘NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.’

Though born in London, and a Freeman, I passed my early life, as I have already said, partly at Reading; and was there educated at the well-known school belonging to and conducted by the Misses Welch. The school is still carried on, though under different management. Whilst I was there, one of the assistant tutors was a Miss Harper, whose father had formerly kept a school at Barnard Castle, Yorkshire. When Dickens’s *Nicholas Nickleby* was published, with its description of Dotheboys Hall, of its owner the immortal Mr Squeers, and his daughter Miss Squeers, of

brimstone and treacle celebrity, it was at once perceived, or supposed, by those who were acquainted with Mr Harper's school, that it was the veritable prototype of Dotheboys Hall, and that the proprietor and his accomplished daughter were the great originals of Mr and Miss Squeers. Parents of the pupils there made inquiries into matters, and withdrew their children. The school was ruined; and 'Mr Squeers' brought an action against the publishers of the offending book. 'Miss Squeers,' finding her occupation gone—so far as Barnard Castle was concerned—had to find a suitable field for her labours elsewhere, and entered the establishment where I was a pupil at Reading.

In a wandering life like ours, the vicissitudes of fortune are endless. At one time the strolling 'professional' may be down on his luck, as it is called; at another he may get an unexpected lift, which may alter the whole tone of his life. The following anecdote is a case in point.

#### HARRY GRAHAM AS A WIZARD.

Before I joined the circus of the younger Ginnett, of circus celebrity, in 1860, I had made the acquaintance of several members of the company travelling with Mr Ginnett's father. Early in the spring of 1859, some business took me into the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, and while passing the *London Apprentice* public-house, I heard my name shouted, and looking round, espied Harry Graham, whom I had known as a clown in the elder Ginnett's circus. He was doing a conjuring trick outside a miserable booth, at the same time inviting the public to walk in, the charge being one halfpenny. On the com-

pletion of the trick, he jumped off the platform, and insisted upon adjourning to the public-house, where he explained the difficulty he was in through having been laid up all the winter with rheumatic gout. On his partial recovery, he was compelled to accept the first thing that offered, which was an engagement with the owner of the booth, a man known in the profession as the 'Dudley Demon.' Poor Harry begged me to give him a start; so, knowing him to be a fair hand at conjuring tricks, I came to an arrangement to take him through the provinces as M. Phillipi the Wizard. This was on a Friday. On the following Wednesday, so quickly had our arrangements been completed, my conjurer appeared at Ramsgate to morning and evening performances; the former netting eighteen pounds, and the latter fourteen pounds; our prices being three shillings, two shillings, and one shilling. Yet in White-chapel this same man would not have earned five shillings a day!

Among other places we visited was Dartford, where I took the *Bull Hotel* assembly-room, which had been recently built, but not yet opened. Mrs S——, a lady of considerable distinction, kindly gave me her patronage, and I arranged for a band from Gravesend. On the day of the performance, towards the afternoon, as the band had not arrived, I sent my assistant to Gravesend with instructions to bring the musicians with him. At half-past seven, the time announced for opening the doors, a large crowd had assembled, as much out of curiosity to see the new room as to witness the performances; so in a short time every seat was occupied. Just before the clock struck eight—the time for commencement—my assistant came rushing in with the

intelligence that the band had gone to Dover to a permanent engagement. I ran round to the stage-door and told Graham. He said it was impossible to give the entertainment without music of *some* sort to carry it off. In my despair, I rushed into the street, intending to go to Reeves the music-seller and hire a pianoforte. But I had not gone far when I heard a squeaking noise, which upon approaching closer, I found to proceed from three very dirty little German boys, one playing a corneopean, another a trombone, and the third a flageolet. On accosting them, I found they could not speak a word of English ; so I took two of them by the arms and dragged them along, leaving the other to follow his companions to their fate. On reaching the building, I could hear the impatient audience making a noise for a start. Harry Graham, on seeing my musicians, said it would upset everything to allow them to be in sight of the audience. ‘I can manage that,’ I said ; ‘we will just put them under the stage, and I will motion them when to strike up and when to leave off.’ In another moment M. Phillipi was on the stage and received with shouts by the audience. At the conclusion of the performance, I went to the front and thanked my patroness, Mrs S——, for her kindness. ‘Ah!’ said that lady, ‘he is very clever. But oh! that horrid unearthly music!’

On finishing the watering-towns, I returned to the metropolis and took the Cabinet Theatre, King’s Cross, where M. Phillipi appeared with success. One evening, to vary the performance, we arranged to do the ‘bottle-trick,’ and specially engaged a confederate, who was to change the bottles from the top of the ladder through one of the stage traps over which the table was placed. By

some error the man took up his position there the moment the bell rang for the curtain to go up, instead of waiting until the commencement of the second part of the entertainment. Commencing his usual address, M. Phillipi explained to the audience that he did not use machinery or employ confederates as other conjurers were wont to do ; and to convince them, he leaned over the front of the table and pulled up the cloth which hung to the ground, exclaiming at the same time : ‘ You see there is nothing here but a common deal table.’ To his surprise, the audience exclaimed : ‘ There is a man there !’ But he was equal to the occasion, and went on with his address, taking an early opportunity of giving the confederate a smart kick, which sent him into the depths below with more haste than he had bargained for.

At this establishment, while under my management, the earthly career of Harry Graham was brought to a close. For many years it had been his boast that his *Richard III.* was second only to Edmund Kean’s, and that he only lacked the opportunity to astound all London with his impersonation of the character. Now, when the opportunity had arrived and he had determined to play it for his benefit, the excitement caused by the realisation of this dream of years was too much for him ; he died, poor fellow, a few days afterwards. He was buried in the Tower Hamlets Cemetery.

MR TOWNSEND, M.P., ON THE STAGE.

At the end of 1860 I joined Ginnett’s circus at Greenwich, and found the business in a wretched condition ; the principal cause of this being that the circus had only a tin



roof and wooden boarding round, and owing to the severe weather, could not be kept warm. I was at my wits' end to improve receipts when, being one day in a barber's shop getting shaved, the barber remarked: 'There goes poor T——.' Upon inquiring, I was informed that the gentleman who had just passed the window had been M.P. for Greenwich; but owing to pecuniary difficulties, had been obliged to resign. My informant added that he was a most excellent actor, having performed *Richard III.* and other plays with great success. What was more, he was an immense favourite in Greenwich and Deptford, having been the means while in the House of Commons of getting the dockyard labourers' wages considerably advanced. It immediately struck me that if I could get the ex-M.P. to perform at our circus, it would be a great hit. With this object in view, I waited upon Mr T—— the next morning, and explained my object. 'Heaven knows,' he said in reply, 'that I want money badly enough; but to do this in Greenwich would be impossible.' I did not give the matter up, but pressed him on several occasions, until at last he consented to appear for a fortnight as *Richard III.* upon sharing 'terms.' The next difficulty was to provide actors for the other leading characters in the piece, there being no one but Mr Ginnett and myself capable of taking a part. This difficulty, however, we got over by cutting the piece down, and 'doubling' for the parts; Mr Ginnett and myself appearing as Richmond, Catesby, Norfolk, Ratcliffe, Stanley, and the ghosts. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the business proved a great success; so much so, that Mr T—— insisted upon treating the whole company to a supper. Shortly after this he went to America.



A WINTER'S JOURNEY—'THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.'

We now made immediate preparations for our journey by road to Cardiff, a journey which, though attractive in summer, in a winter such as that of 1860-1, was something to be remembered for a lifetime. A month's frost had preceded Christmas ; snow lay deep on the ground ; a partial thaw, followed by a frost still more intense, had rendered the roads almost impassable for any kind of traffic, more especially so for the large and cumbrous vans with which a circus moves from place to place. To make matters still more uncomfortable, the ample funds placed at my disposal for the entire journey to Cardiff ran out more quickly than they should have done, and as a natural consequence I had afterwards to cut and contrive in various ways, not adding very much thereby to the comfort of our company. But I am anticipating.

Our first resting-place was Maidenhead, a town which we reached on Sunday. Going straight to the *White Hart*, the principal hotel of the place, we applied for admission, but were refused. In face of this unexpected rebuff, I tried other hostelries, but these all followed the lead of the *White Hart*. My only resource then was to go to the superintendent of police, who, after receiving my statement, accompanied me to the nearest magistrate. This gentleman, with great courtesy and promptitude, immediately sallied forth into the bitter cold, and came with us to the *White Hart*, outside the closed portals of which the members of our company were awaiting my return, like Peris at the gate of Paradise. The magistrate at once ordered the premises to be opened to us, which of course was immediately

done. The moment the other hotel-keepers saw the *White Hart* throw wide its doors, they flocked round me with pressing offers of entertainment for man and beast. But I at once decided that as all the hotels alike had refused to take us in, and the *White Hart* alone had suffered the ignominy of magisterial coercion, the *White Hart* alone should benefit by our presence.

Departing from Maidenhead, we continued our westward course. Funds, as I have already suggested, were being expended more rapidly than was warranted by the distance we had travelled, considering that I had to make what I had last the whole journey, or be censured for a bad manager if I applied for more. The commissariat was in a woful plight; an insignificant matter in genial weather, but a most trying hardship when one is exposed to all the severity of an arctic winter. In the midst of such trials as these, however, we could make our joke, good-humouredly comparing our journey with the disastrous westward flight of Napoleon across the Russian wastes; and as the 'Retreat from Moscow' this episode has ever since been alluded to by those who took part in it.

Continuing on our way, we passed through Cheltenham, where we found Myers's circus performing; then through Gloucester and Newport; and finally brought our tedious and wretched journey to a close at Cardiff. We had lost six valuable horses on the road, victims to short-comings and severe weather combined. Ginnett, however, in spite of these unpleasant drawbacks, was sanguine and full of the coming business. So we set to work with a will, to make amends for past ill-luck, and secure a successful season in our new location.

## CHAPTER II.

### ‘TEMPERANCE TOWN,’ CARDIFF.

THE building we had engaged for our performances at Cardiff had a curious history. Some few years previous there had been a waste tract of land bordering on the harbour, which had been a constant source of trouble to the authorities, in consequence of its lying low and being flooded by the tide. A market-gardener named Matthews, at the neighbouring village of Crockherbtown, set his heart upon this desolate waste, and saw a possible bargain to be got out of it. After some little negotiations he obtained a lease of the entire tract for ninety-nine years, at the nominal rental of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. Scarcely was the ink of this document dry, when the energetic gardener erected a conspicuous notice-board announcing that ‘Fourpence a load was given for dry rubbish.’ In a wonderfully short time Father Neptune was driven back a considerable distance, the land was levelled, building was in operation, and terraces and streets laid out where lately the wash of the tide had left its daily deposit of loathsome mud. A sea-wall was built, which still further secured and enlarged the reclaimed tract; and in the midst of this new-born town there shortly arose the imposing edifice known as ‘Temperance Hall,’ the neighbourhood itself being called ‘Temperance Town.’ ‘I made my first bit o’ money,’ said the now wealthy Mr Matthews, ‘through being a temperate man myself; and I mean to spend some of my money in promoting temperance in others.’ In this he has no doubt been successful to a large extent, as far as zeal can insure success.

## THE LADY AMATEUR—A QUEEN WITHOUT COURTIER.

The first incident connected with our stay at Cardiff happened during the performance of an equestrian spectacle entitled *The Tournament, or Kenilworth Castle in the Days of Good Queen Bess*. For the processional portion of the entertainment we had to engage the services of a large number of supernumeraries; and of course it was highly desirable that the Virgin Queen, who naturally constituted a chief attraction in the piece, should be worthily represented by a handsome woman of good presence and self-possessed bearing. Walking down Bute Street one day, I chanced to espy, serving in a fruiterer's shop, a good-looking woman, who, judging from her faultless style whilst engaged in supplying her customers with the luscious fruits around her, seemed to be well qualified to sustain the regal dignities I had at my disposal. Entering the shop, I made a small purchase, asking a few casual questions, and then, as adroitly as I could, introduced the subject which lay uppermost in my thoughts. At first the maiden was coy and required a little rhetorical pressure. So I pictured to her the beautiful costumes in which the lords and ladies of her retinue would be dressed, and finally described in glowing colours the gorgeous apparel that she, the Maiden Queen, would wear. My sartorial appeal proved successful. The lady consented to take the part—though, quietly speaking, I thought it was the 'part' that had taken her! She attended a rehearsal, was highly gratified at the stage homage she received, and seemed carried into a seventh heaven of delight when seated on her throne surrounded by her attendants, ready, like so many slaves, to do her queenly bidding.

On the first night of the piece everything went well until the close. I had already passed out of the ring towards the front of the final procession, and had retired to my dressing-room to prepare for the next portion of the entertainment, when suddenly Mr Ginnett, the proprietor of our circus, rushed in greatly excited, and exclaimed breathlessly : ‘There’s that stupid fool of a woman still sitting on her throne!’ I immediately hastened to the ring doors, when to my consternation and dismay I saw the Queen seated composedly on her throne ; not a soul with her, and the boys in the gallery pelting her vigorously with orange-peel. I beckoned to her to ‘come off ;’ but she seemed to have lost all presence of mind, and sat stolidly there, occasionally dodging some of the larger pieces of peel which threatened the integrity of her wonderful headgear and the enormous ruff round her neck. My endeavours to attract her attention being fruitless, I sent one of the grooms to fetch her off her throne ; and then, amid roars of laughter and with greetings from all parts of the house, Her Gracious Majesty gathered up her royal robes about her and made an undignified bolt out of the ring.

An explanation of the ‘hitch’ was afterwards forthcoming. Harry Ginnett—the brother of my employer—whose duty it was, as the Earl of Leicester, to lead the Queen off the throne and retire at the close of the procession, had, for a joke, whispered to her that she was to stay there till sent for !

#### JOINING THE TEETOTALERS.

I have stated that Mr Matthews the owner of the building at Cardiff, was an earnest disciple of temperance principles

himself, and anxious to encourage the practice of those principles by others. Amongst the various means adopted or patronised by him, frequent lectures were given in Temperance Hall; and in consequence of this, we had agreed to an arrangement to use the Hall for five nights only in the week, each Friday evening being left free for the purposes alluded to. On the other hand, by way of concession to us, Mr Matthews had come to an understanding with the conductors of the temperance meetings that at the close of the proceedings on each Friday night, Mr Ginnett's manager—myself—should be allowed to address the audience and 'give out' before them all, our programme of attractions for the ensuing week. For about six or seven weeks this arrangement was carried out to the letter, with no small benefit to ourselves. It was in fact a most direct and telling advertisement, more powerful even than the columns of a newspaper; for the building was on these occasions invariably crammed, and a personal appeal is by many degrees more forcible than an appeal in print. When the last speaker at these meetings had subsided into his seat, the chairman himself, or perhaps some other gentleman on the platform, would blandly state that 'Mr Montague wished to engage their attention for a few moments in order that he might announce to them the nature of the forthcoming performances in that building;' sometimes a good-natured eulogium to the effect that our entertainment was 'of a most innocent, instructive, and interesting description, and deserved the hearty support of all present.' What could be more favourable to us than this?

Thus introduced, I stood up and 'gave out,' as the phrase goes, all the novelties and attractions of the next week's



programme, and did my best to secure a goodly number of recruits from the crowded benches around me. This amicable arrangement was, as I have already said, continued without let or hindrance for the space of six or seven weeks. But when the next Friday night came round there had arisen a new chairman who knew not Matthews ; or who, at any-rate, regarded not the sensible arrangement which that gentleman had made with us.

It was a strict teetotalers' meeting. Of this I was fully aware beforehand ; and had I not been apprised of the fact, the uncompromising tone of the speeches would have informed me that I had to deal with people of extreme views. I had certain misgivings, but put them aside and awaited the issue. At the close of the last speaker's address I prepared myself for the usual request to be permitted to make my appeal. Alas ! my expectations were in vain. No one paid me the slightest heed. But I was not going to allow matters to remain thus. Standing up boldly from my seat at the side of the platform, I commenced to address the audience. The chairman, nonplussed by this unexpected addition to his programme, hurriedly inquired who I might be ; and having ascertained that I was the manager of the circus that held its daily performances in that building, he was apparently struck with amazement to find me on my legs addressing *his* meeting. I pretended to be unconscious of the dilemma in which the chairman found himself, and proceeded with my opening words, until some one sitting near me pulled at my coat-tails, and drew my attention to the fact that the chairman wanted to speak to me. Yielding instant obedience to his official authority, I proceeded in a low tone to explain matters to him, assuring him that it was all correct, that I

was doing precisely what I had previously done for the past six or seven weeks, and that Mr Matthews himself had agreed to the arrangement. But explanations were useless. I was duly informed that this was a strict teetotalers' meeting, and that none but those who were members of the body and had taken the pledge could be allowed to address the audience. I was therefore out of place and must not speak. So decided the chairman ; but I could not submit to be snuffed out in that style. What would Mr Ginnett and the members of the company have thought of my capacity as a manager had I proved unable to 'manage' a little hitch like that ? An idea struck me, and without further thought I immediately acted upon it. Turning to the chairman I said, in rather a confident manner, as though satisfied that I had solved the difficulty and would be allowed to proceed : ' Sir, I have taken the pledge '——

Without another question, or even another word, the good gentleman stepped quickly to the front of the platform and exclaimed triumphantly : ' Ladies and gentlemen—I am happy to say that we have got the thin edge of the wedge in ; the manager of the circus has taken the pledge ! '

A perfect tumult of applause greeted this unexpected announcement—a most fortunate matter for me, as it gave me time for reflection. After quiet had been restored, the chairman added, with a gesture and tone of voice which seemed to welcome me into the brotherhood : ' Mr Montague will now address you ! '

Another burst of applause greeted me as I again stood up. How to go on with my speech I did not know ; however, I began : ' Ladies and gentlemen, I have taken the pledge '—— Louder applause than ever—more time for



reflection. 'I have taken the pledge to produce in this building, to-morrow night, the very best performance we have given this season.' Amazement was depicted on every face, and exclamations began to arise from the platform and from other parts of the house. But without the slightest pause, and paying no heed to the gathering storm, I went on at the top of my voice : 'It will be the grand romantic equestrian *spectacle* entitled Dick Turpin's Ride to York, or the Death of Bonnie Black Bess, that famous steed being represented by the most highly trained mare in the world.'

I could not proceed. A deafening storm of hooting and yelling and hissing drowned my last words, nor would the audience be induced to listen to me again. I therefore quietly sat down, and soon afterwards the meeting terminated.

I have not yet forgotten the comments that were made by the local press upon the foregoing proceedings. A column or more in each newspaper was devoted to a humorous account of the affair ; and it was noised abroad and commented upon in a manner not altogether pleasant for these worthy people, whose zeal in an undeniably good cause had somewhat outrun their discretion.

#### 'DICK TURPIN' IN CHURCH.

The mention of our performance of *Dick Turpin* reminds me of a little incident arising out of it. Mr Ginnett, after an absence of a few days at his father's funeral, had returned to his duties, and on the following Saturday took the part of Dick Turpin, while I appeared as Tom King. On the following morning, Mr Ginnett wished to go to church, and desired that I should accompany him thither.

A little before the service commenced, we entered the sacred edifice, walking up the side aisle, which was skirted on either hand with free seats, already occupied by the Sunday-school children and the humbler classes. As we passed these, a lad, in a voice loud enough to be heard for some distance round, exclaimed to a companion sitting near : ‘ Look, ’Arry, there goes Dick Turpin and Tom King !’ Our feelings, after being thus pointedly alluded to, can be better imagined than described.

‘ POLLY BUTTONHOLE.’

When, at the close of our stay at Cardiff, the occasion of my benefit drew nigh, I thought that the introduction of a good song or two would be an acceptable addition to the programme. Happening to mention my desire to Mr S——, a tradesman with whom I was well acquainted, he said he knew of just the person for the occasion—a young lady of considerable acquirements, who could sing beautifully, and who, though at one time in good circumstances, was now poor, and would be glad of a little money. An interview was arranged, at which she gave a specimen of her vocal powers. Terms were agreed upon, a rehearsal gone through, and eventually the evening came round. I had announced her name in the advertisements and placards as ‘ Miss Louisa Vinning, from London.’ The song she had agreed to render was *Beautiful Star*, with another in reserve, in case of an encore. When the supposed ‘ star’ arrived at the hall, the ladies of our company were of course alive with expectation, not unmingled with envy of the interest centred in the new-comer.

The song was given most satisfactorily, the singer being

rewarded with a rapturous encore ; in response to which she sang another song, the title of which I now forget. Again the audience applauded, and the fair songstress withdrew. At the close of the performance, Mr Matthews, who had honoured my benefit with his patronage and presence, came round to me. ‘Don’t you know,’ asked he, ‘who that young girl is that sung to-night?’ ‘Not the slightest idea,’ I answered. ‘S—— introduced her to me. Who is she?’ With a gesture and look which made me suppose that I had made some outrageous mistake, he replied : ‘Why, it’s “Polly Buttonhole !”’ In answer to my plea of ignorance, and the desire I expressed to know who Polly Buttonhole might be, Mr Matthews then gave me her history, by no means an exceptional one : A happy childhood, a heartless lover, disgrace, distress. That is the epitome of her sad life.

#### SAVING THE SITUATION.

During our stay at Cardiff, the American circus of Howes and Cushing arrived in the town, bringing with it Tom Sayers the famous pugilist, who had joined the company some time previously, and was now travelling with it from town to town, causing a great attraction, and filling the proprietors’ pockets. The agent in advance having advertised a ‘one-night stay’ in Cardiff, I felt sure that our house would be empty, unless I adopted some plan to avert so undesirable a result. Mr Ginnett being temporarily absent, I had to use my own discretion as to the proper course to pursue. I determined to issue free orders, for that night only, to all parts of the house except the reserved seats. Ten thousand of these tickets were printed, and promptly distributed from door to door, street by street, until the whole

were delivered. Special attractions were announced by placards ; and when the momentous evening arrived, enormous mobs, twice as many as the hall would hold, besieged our doors at an early hour ; the excitement and anxiety to get in being so great, that it would have been a hopeless task to attempt to take the tickets as the people passed through. I therefore ordered that the doors should be thrown wide open, and the crowds allowed to pass inside until all the seats were full. Feeling convinced that a large number of those still outside, being bent upon witnessing the performance, would rather pay to come in than go away again disappointed, I went out to them, and expressed my regret that so many were unable to obtain entrance. I explained that every part of the house was full except the reserved seats, and that the price for admission to these was two shillings each. Very many more than we could accommodate came forward with their money, and these were passed in until every seat was occupied. Upwards of seventeen pounds was thus taken ; while it is probable that, had we not adopted the steps above described, we should not have taken any money at all.

Before the close of the performance, Sayers came across to pay us a visit, their entertainment being over before ours. Looking at our crowded benches and reserved seats, he was amazed at the business we were doing.

#### SAYERS AT GREENWICH.

Talking of Sayers reminds me that while our company was performing at Greenwich in 1860, we were the first to introduce Sayers into the circus ring. Shortly after his fight with Heenan the American, Sayers went to Liverpool to visit a relative of mine, Mr Stent, one of his principal backers ; and

whilst there he was invited to meet at dinner the members of the Stock Exchange, by whom he was presented with a purse of a hundred and fifty pounds. It would have seemed incredible to any one at that time, that during the comparatively short space of nineteen years—this is written in 1879—public opinion upon the question of prize-fights should change so quickly as it has. Such, however, is the case, and a happy change it is.

Having suggested to Mr Ginnett that it would be a great draw if we could get Sayers to appear at the circus, he agreed with the idea ; so I immediately telegraphed to the champion, making him an offer. This was accepted. On the day fixed for his appearance, I set off in good time for his residence in Camden Town in a light carriage, drawn by a pair of ponies. On returning, the vehicle contained Sayers and his son, Harry Brunton, and myself. All along the route south of the river there were plenty of people on the look-out for us, who had by some means heard that we should pass. But when we arrived at Deptford, the crowds were immense and the cheering continuous. Here the mob, having taken out the ponies, drew the carriage with its occupants at a fair speed through the crowded streets the whole distance from Deptford to the *Greyhound* hotel at Greenwich, outside which, while we were taking some refreshment, an immense concourse of seven or eight thousand people assembled. At 7.30—the time at which our performance ought to have commenced at the circus—not a dozen souls had entered the building. Ginnett, with all his experience, was puzzled to account for this, and came in hot haste to the *Greyhound* to learn where I was and what I was doing. With great difficulty he managed to make his way through the dense crowd

—the sight of which quite accounted to him for the emptiness of the circus—and entered the hotel. The next problem was, how to get Sayers to the circus. It was decided to harness two powerful horses to a brougham, and drive through the crowd as best we could. This succeeded. The people followed us, and the circus was soon filled to overflowing; and the evening's performance, including a friendly encounter with the gloves between Sayers and Brunton, was in every way a success. As an illustration of the extraordinary popularity of Sayers at that time, I may state that numbers of people gave half a sovereign apiece for the simple honour of being allowed to shake hands with him!

‘SWEET WILLIAM’ AND THE PERFORMING MARE.

On one occasion we were preparing for our promenade through the streets, when a kind of ‘hanger-on’ to our company, who, through his invariable politeness of manner, had been nicknamed ‘Sweet William,’ was deputed to ride a highly trained black mare, one of whose tricks consisted in undoing her girths with her teeth and removing her saddle. Sweet William was the last to leave the stables, the others having passed out before he had mounted. Suddenly loud cries of ‘Murder!’ were heard to proceed from the stable, and I shouted out as I went towards the spot: ‘What’s the matter? Who is it?’ ‘It’s me,’ replied the agonised voice of Sweet William. ‘Make haste—the mare’s got hold of my toe!’ And sure enough I found the man on the mare’s back, writhing and twisting about, his face describing the most painful contortions, and his toe in the mare’s mouth! The more he struggled, the harder she pulled at what, through some misadventure, she mistook for the girth-straps. Perhaps



also she mistook his shouts for the vociferous cheers of a pleased audience, and thought it was 'all right ;' and at it again she went with redoubled vigour. By some means he must have made some slight movement, which the mare thought to be her signal to perform the trick, and went to work accordingly. However, the man was speedily released from his awkward predicament, and the cavalcade proceeded on its way ; but it was a long time before the incident itself ceased to excite a good-natured laugh at the expense of Sweet William.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A TENTING TOUR THROUGH THE PROVINCES.

I HAVE already spoken at some length of our stay at Cardiff in the winter of 1860-61, and related a few of the incidents connected with our performances there. At the close of the season we started on a tenting tour through South Wales, at about the time when the fresh, warm, cheering days of early spring were making us forget the rigours of the past winter months. At such a time, and passing through scenery so romantic as that of Wales, a journey of this description has many attractions ; and in spite of the really arduous work of the constantly recurring performances, the members of the company have a very pleasant time of it. This is more especially true in any well-appointed concern under efficient management and well established in the popular favour. But with some of the small strolling companies that traverse the kingdom in every direction and at all seasons of the year, the life they lead is, to say the least, anything but romantic. Having used the words 'tenting tour,' it occurs to me that

my readers may perhaps be desirous to know more fully the meaning of the expression. I therefore propose to describe briefly the manner in which these undertakings are conducted, and the kind of life a travelling company of recognised standing leads.

It may be well to explain that there are two distinct kinds of circuses—firstly, those that perform in permanent buildings only ; secondly, those that ‘tent’ in the spring and summer, and occupy buildings in the winter. Of the first kind there are at the time of writing (1879) five companies in the United Kingdom—namely Newsome’s, Hengler’s, Cooke’s, Adams’, and Keith’s. These never perform in tents. Of the other class, there are eight recognised circuses ; their proprietors being Messrs Sanger, Myers, Pinders, Batty, Powell and Clarke, F. Ginnett, G. Ginnett, and Swallow. These are the ‘tenting’ companies, giving their performances for the greater portion of the year in the tent which they carry about from town to town. Besides the names given, there are a few other small companies ; but these are carried on by speculators only, who as a rule last but a few months, or even less than that. It is a well-known fact that none but those who are trained to the work from their youth, can ever properly manage a company or insure its financial success.

A matter of the first importance in projecting a tour is to prepare beforehand a plentiful supply of novelties, to be produced at the various performances, in order to serve as an additional attraction to those who perhaps would not favour us with their patronage, did they think that we were always grinding away, like a musical box, at the same old themes. There must be something new and good. Some unusually graceful or daring rider ; some clever conjurer or mirth-



provoking clown ; some rare equine specimen, beautifully marked and wonderfully trained—all or some of these ; and added to them, a variety of entirely new pieces for the company in general must be secured, brought together, and worked up into an attractive programme ; proper steps being taken to let the public know in good time what treats there are in store for them. In order thoroughly to attain this latter point, and to make other timely arrangements, each company sends forward an ‘agent in advance’ along the identical route to be followed by the circus, and arriving in each selected town some days, or even weeks before the date fixed for the performances. This agent’s duties are multifarious and of a responsible nature ; and indeed upon his shrewdness and experience not a little of the success of the tour depends. His first duty is to make prompt arrangements for thoroughly ‘billing’ the town—that is, displaying the large coloured pictorial and printed announcements on all the available hoardings, dead-walls, bridges, and other conspicuous places in the town and immediate neighbourhood. Then a suitable site has to be chosen on which to erect the tent with its adjuncts. Lodgings for the principals must be secured ; and what is of no less importance, good stabling for the stud of valuable horses. All conveniences in fact in any way necessary for the comfort of the company are arranged beforehand, and are ready for them when they arrive. The agent in advance is to a travelling circus what scouts are to an invading army ; with this difference, that he is the herald of a peaceful host which seeks no triumphs but those of Art, and strives to secure its conquests by leaving behind it in each town a strong garrison of pleasurable recollections.

To complete his round of duties, the agent sends back by

post to the proprietor, copies of all contracts made by him, particulars of the lodgings secured for the company, full information for the stud-groom as to which are the best stables for the more valuable horses, descriptions of the road to be traversed ; and in short, places the proprietor on the same footing as though the latter had himself visited the town and made all the arrangements. It is easy to perceive that by following out this methodical system, all chance of confusion when the company arrives is entirely avoided. The agent having thus fulfilled his task, passes on to the next town, and leaves us at liberty to turn our attention to the coming guests.

I will suppose, for the sake of illustration, that a performance has been given in the town of A., and that it is intended to repeat the performance the next day at the town of B., say fifteen miles distant. Before the company separates for the evening, the hour of departure on the following morning is fixed and announced, and other necessary arrangements made. When long distances have to be traversed, the circus is often on the road as early as four in the morning. But for the distance above stated, the vans would start about six o'clock, and reach their destination, under average circumstances, at or a little after nine. Upon their arrival in the town, all sections of the company have their duties to perform, and not a moment to lose in setting about them. The vans having been driven straight to the chosen ground, and left there until required for 'parade,' the stud-groom sees that the horses are taken to their stables to be thoroughly groomed and fed. The principal members of the company seek out their lodgings and take a slight repast ; while the tent-master and his assistants, having unloaded from each van its share

of the tent, commence at once to erect that ephemeral structure, and to arrange within it the boxes, pit, and gallery for the spectators, and the ring for the performers. By noon the tent is complete—the tentmaster being liable to a fine if not then ready—and the company begin to assemble in time to dress for parade. All the horses but a chosen few are gaily trapped in what is called their ‘dress harness,’ and are attached to the different caravans that are now relieved of their loads. Some of the company are mounted upon the choice horses of the stud—magnificent, proud-spirited, high-stepping creatures these animals are—while others, representing various allegorical characters, such as Britannia, Victory, Peace, Plenty, &c. are prominently enthroned on the vehicles. At last all is ready; the signal for the start is given, and the band going first, strikes up a lively air; the drummer having a lively faith in the power of his instrument to attract a crowd, plies his sticks vigorously—Plenty and not Peace being the goddess of his choice—crowds of ragged urchins and well-dressed children, and grown-up people no less plentiful, appear as if by magic on the scene, and elbow each other about in their endeavour to obtain a good position to see the ‘cavalcade’ go by. Thus the principal thoroughfares of the town and suburbs are paraded until towards 2 P.M., at which time the pay office is opened for the morning performance, and the audience begin to take their places in the tent.

At 2.30 the performance commences; the clown comes tumbling into the ring, and having brought himself somehow to a momentary stand-still, opens the proceedings with the original remark, at which every one laughs for the thousandth time, ‘Here we are again!’ after which he goes on with his

tumbling, or carries on a wordy passage-of-arms with the polite and forbearing ring-master, until the equestrian business begins. The performance is usually over about 4 P.M. ; and soon after this the company partake of their principal meal—their dinner. A word or two on the all-important subject of dining will furnish a natural close to the day's proceedings and to this short description of them. The company forms itself into what are called 'catering-parties,' usually consisting of six or seven persons, one member of each party—who is called the 'caterer'—being appointed to superintend the commissariat department. It is his duty, whether the stay in a town be long or short, to arrange terms for his party or 'mess' at some hotel or other establishment, and to see that the catering is good in quality and style. These messes usually have nicknames given them, according to the status of the members, or their character for lavishness or economy. Thus perhaps in a single company you may find such names as the 'Royal,' the 'Champagne,' the 'Quisby' mess—Quisby being a synonym for 'cheap,' and a word that has got into use in other quarters besides the ring and the stage. The mention of these two institutions together reminds me of another nickname common to both. The proprietor of a circus or lessee of a theatre, instead of being spoken of familiarly as the 'master' or 'governor' or 'gaffer,' frequently goes by the euphonious title of 'the Rumcull.'

I will now return to the individual tour of which I had commenced to write. After completing our pilgrimage through South Wales, we found upon entering the Midlands again, that our American rivals, Messrs Howes and Cushing, were playing sad havoc among the English proprietors by the wholesale manner in which they had gone into the business.

Their company had been so greatly increased in strength, that it had been divided, first into two distinct companies, then into three; and ultimately there were four American companies belonging to this single proprietary, competing keenly against us for popular support. As it is quite useless for two circuses to perform in the same town at or near the same time, this multiplication of rival establishments had the direct effect of limiting our field of operations, or rather, I should say, of compelling us to extend our operations into fresh fields and pastures new. For this reason, then, we 'took the fairs' at the various towns on our route; so that by offering special attractions, we received, in spite of the not very good state of trade in the district through which we passed, a fair share of support, and had no cause to complain of the pecuniary results. A few incidents connected with the remainder of our tour may be worth relating here.

#### IN DANGER OF A 'TANNING.'

A laughable but to me unpleasant incident happened at Eccleshall, in the following manner. I was staying at the *Royal Oak*, the landlord of which had formerly been a commercial traveller in those parts, had 'used the house,' had seen and loved the widowed landlady thereof, and finally had become her husband and landlord of the snug little inn. As a guest at the house, his welcome had invariably been cordial; as a suitor for the hand of the disconsolate widow, he had found little cause for complaint at the manner of his reception; but after the nuptial knot had been tied—— Well, I will relate the incident; merely remarking that the goodman was always loath to lose a cheerful guest, and to have to fall back upon the resources of the family circle for good company.

I had arrived on Saturday, had completed my business, had spent Sunday with mine host and his spouse, the hour for my departure on the following morning had arrived, and my groom had driven round to the door with my dog Lion, a fine Newfoundland, at his heels. 'That's a fine dog of yours,' quoth the host, who had already shaken hands with me.

'Yes,' I replied; 'he's a handsome creature; and what's more, he's as clever as he's handsome.'

'Is he indeed now? Well, I know of a most extraordinary dog close by; didn't think of it before; you *must* see it before you go—won't take five minutes.'

Though pressed for time, I felt obliged to humour the man, and accordingly accompanied him down the street until he stopped at a high pair of gates leading into the yard of a large tannery. Being intimate with the proprietor, my host passed through the small door and bade me follow. The yard was full of pits used for the various processes of preparing and tanning the hides; the edges of these holes were level with the ground, without any protection, and each pit was full of hides in pickle; the liquid in which they were immersed having acquired a most vile and fetid smell of decomposing animal matter. Now for the dog.

'Look yonder,' said my guide; 'there's the dog. Isn't he a fine creature?'

I looked. A hideous monster met my gaze—a great bulldog of the famous Spanish breed, with a head big enough for three, and the most formidable pair of jaws that one could wish to behold. I shrank back instinctively.

'Don't be frightened,' said my companion in reassuring tones; 'he's as quiet as a lamb when he knows you.'



‘Very possibly,’ I rejoined; ‘and until he *does* know me, I prefer keeping at a safe distance;’ saying which, I retreated another step or two backwards, and fell plump into a tan-pit! How I managed with my friend’s assistance to scramble out again, is more than I can tell. The smell from my soaking garments was atrocious and well-nigh unbearable. However, there was nothing to be done but hurry back to the hotel and make the best of a bad business. Arrived at the door, I told my man to follow me up to my room with a complete change of clothes, which I always carried with me, and then I entered the house. Drip, drip, drip! Every step I took along the well-cleaned floor and up the neatly carpeted stairs into my room, a little stream of the horrible stuff ran freely down, spoiling everything where I went. As for the landlady, at first she witnessed all in silent horror; but after she had ‘got the scent,’ she ‘gave tongue’ with a vengeance! I stripped and washed from head to foot, put on my clean clothes, had the others stuffed into an empty corn-bag to be washed at the next town, and was soon on my way. But unpleasant as my adventure had proved, it must have been far preferable to the pickle in which my poor friend the landlord would find himself when the guest had quitted the scene!

#### ‘LION’ MOUNTING GUARD.

As just explained, it was the presence of my dog and the landlord’s admiration of him that led indirectly to my unsavoury adventure. But I am unwilling to dismiss my noble Lion from these pages without putting it on record that he was capable of better deeds than getting others into trouble through his good looks.

We had been performing at Allston, a solitary little town surrounded by the Cumberland moors, where human habitations are few and far between, and where, in the winter, travellers have lost their way and perished in the snow. When we started across Allston Moor on our road to Keswick, the ground was covered deeply with snow, which was still falling ; thus adding an element of difficulty and even of danger to our journey, considering the scant and imperfect character of the roads, which in some parts had no existence whatever, the direction being indicated by poles placed at long distances apart. When we arrived at Keswick, the tent-master, not having noticed my dog during the morning, came to ask if he was with me. I had not seen him, but felt no anxiety on the matter, as the dog would often roam about and find his way to us again. Presently the property-man came to me to say that he could not find the pulley-blocks and rope—specially constructed for hoisting and straining the tight-rope, a clever performance upon which, by two sisters of the name of Bourne, had been announced beforehand, and would form an important feature in our entertainment. A further search was made, but still the missing articles could not be found. As without these appliances it would be impossible to give the tight-rope performance, I had horses put to a light carriage and drove as rapidly as possible back towards Allston. Arrived near the town, a man informed me that a large dog, which he believed belonged to our company, was sitting in the field a little farther on, where our tent had lately stood. I soon reached the spot, and there sure enough was Lion standing breast-deep in the snow, in the middle of the field. I called to him ; but he only wagged his tail and gave a little bark of satisfac-



tion at seeing me, but would not stir from the spot. Jumping out of my vehicle, I crossed the field to where he stood; and beheld, half-buried in the snow, the missing blocks and rope! The intelligent and faithful creature knew that the articles had been wrongly left behind, and I do not think it too much to say that he knew or hoped that some one would come back for them, and thus find them and him together. If any one should think I am claiming too much power of thought or insight for my dog, let him study the following incident, for the exact truth of which I vouch, and in corroboration, give the names of the persons and places concerned.

‘LION’ SENT ON AN ERRAND.

I was driving from Redhill in Surrey to the village of Merstham, about three miles away. When I had proceeded some distance on the road, it began to rain rather fast, and I discovered that I was without my umbrella. The last call I had made in Redhill was at the shop of Mr Kain the chemist, and I felt sure that I had left my umbrella there, standing against the front of the counter. Pulling up under a tree for shelter, I began to consider what I should do, and at the same moment Lion came suddenly round to the front of the trap, as though to learn what we were stopping for. The thought struck me that I might perhaps make Lion my messenger in the matter. If I could only get him to go back to the shop, Mr Kain would probably understand why he had been sent, and would put the umbrella in the dog’s mouth to carry to me. Having engaged Lion’s attention, I waved my hand with an onward sweep along the road towards Redhill. The dog’s eyes followed my hand readily

enough, and then he looked in my face with a puzzled air. Again and again I repeated my gestures, the poor animal looking more perplexed each time, and thinking perhaps that his master was making a ridiculous exhibition of himself. However, I persevered with my efforts ; and as I made one vigorous and expressive sweep of the hand, the dog pricked up his ears, the puzzled look vanished from his face, and then, with a little toss of his nose towards me, as though he would have said : ‘ All right, governor !—I know what you ’ve been driving at,’ he started off towards Redhill at the top of his speed, and was soon out of sight round a distant bend of the road. After this intelligent interpretation of my meaning, my readers will scarcely be surprised to hear that before long—in an incredibly short time, I thought—Lion reappeared round the curve carrying in his mouth my missing umbrella, which he delivered up to me with all the demonstrations of satisfaction and pleasure of which a dog is capable.

But the best has yet to come. Up to that moment all I knew, or could know, was that my dog had brought the umbrella for which I sent him. When I returned to Redhill in the evening, I called upon Mr Kain, and thanked him for his trouble ; adding, before he had time to speak : ‘ You managed to understand him, then ? ’

‘ Managed to understand him ! ’ he replied, with a curious look on his face. ‘ O yes ; he didn’t leave me in doubt very long. Confound the dog ! And I’ve got a nice little bill against you for damages he has done.’

‘ Why, how’s that ? ’ said I in amazement.

‘ Well, I was standing near the door when your dog came bounding in at the top of his speed, nearly knocking me over. He began sniffing about ; and then it struck me that

you were returning for your umbrella, which I had found and put behind the counter, and that the dog had got here first. I was just going round to get the umbrella, so as to have it ready for you, when the great animal, after standing up against the counter and sniffing over it, made a spring on to the top, and was down at the back before I could get near him, breaking a lot of bottles and measures and upsetting others in his course. He took your umbrella in his mouth, and tried to jump on to the counter again. But the umbrella kept catching, first one end and then the other ; and the space was so narrow that he could not make the leap. As soon as I dared, I took hold of the umbrella, to take it off him ; but he held on tight, and would not let me have it ; so partly by coaxing and partly by dragging, I got him round to the trap-door, and pulled him through. Then without stopping even to say "Thank you," he bolted through the door, and was off down the street like a shot out of a gun.'

THE BRIGHTON DOG-DOCTOR—'TUBBING THE DOG.'

Before quitting the subject of dogs, I will relate the following amusing anecdote. While our circus was at Brighton, a person whom I will call Mr Spill, paid frequent visits to our performances, and soon made himself at home behind the scenes. This gentleman had earned a name for curing numberless disorders that affect dogs and cats, more especially dogs ; and among these again, most especially lapdogs and other petted species so highly treasured by elderly single ladies. One day said Spill to me : ' Mr Montague, I should like you to come and see my infirmary.' (It must be understood that his cures were effected upon his own premises,

and that he had adopted the high-sounding title of 'Dog and Cat Infirmary' for his far-famed establishment.) I accepted his invitation with pleasure, thinking that it would prove interesting to inspect the internal arrangements of his peculiar hospital. Arrived at the house—I beg pardon, the infirmary—I expected to see some signs or hear some sounds of Mr Spill's canine patients. Failing to do so, however, I asked my host if he kept his infirmary up-stairs. 'O dear no,' he replied. 'Come this way, and I'll soon show you all about it.' I followed him out into the garden; and there, ranged around the stump of an old tree, I beheld a number of broad shallow tubs, bottom upwards, and pierced with holes for ventilation. Under each of these tubs was a dog, the collection of tubs constituting the 'infirmary!' But how about the medicine, the dietary, &c.? Mr Spill's answer to my string of questions was so characteristic, that I will give it in his own words.

You see, said he, I suit the treatment to the disorder. Well-nigh every dog I am sent for to look at is suffering from the same thing—too much to eat and too little to do. They're pampered and messed with and overfed; and when they get here, I just give them a opposite treatment. Only yesterday, I took a little King Charles home to Lady G——. Well, her case is just about like the lot; at least in the main it is. When she first sent for me, I was ushered into her Ladyship's presence, and there was the dog lying in a basket that was stuffed with a feather pillow, and stuck right in front of a blazing fire.

'Ah,' sighed her Ladyship, 'I'm so glad you've come. My little dog seems much worse; he can hardly breathe, poor little darling!'

Well, I hoisted the poor little darling out of the basket—very carefully, you know, and put him on my knees. Dogs never snap at me ; we understand each other.

‘His nose is very warm, marm,’ I said.

‘Is it indeed ?’ said she.

‘His eyes aren’t at all bright, marm,’ I said.

‘O no, my good man ; they’re not like they used to be,’ said she.

‘And your Ladyship,’ I said, just a bit sad, ‘his little ’art beats very irregular.’

‘Dear me !’ said she.

‘I assoom,’ said I, ‘that he is suffering from general nervous debility.’

‘You don’t say so !’ said she.

‘There’s no doubt about it, marm,’ I said ; ‘though most people as profess to understand dogs would think he’d got the distemper, and would a’most kill him in trying to cure him. But I know just what treatment he wants, marm ; for he ain’t no worse than the Duchess of B——’s dog, and I cured it.’

‘O did you really ?’ said she. ‘Well now, are you obliged to take dear, dear little Floss quite away ? Couldn’t you pay him daily visits and give him his medicine ?’

‘O no marm,’ I said. ‘This case is far too serious for that ; he wants constant treatment. I can do him more good in a week in the infirmary than in a month out.’

‘Well, my good man, if he must go he must. But be sure and take very great care of him.’ And then she gave me a long list of things I was to give him to eat, things for breakfast and things for dinner, and things for tea and

supper. And said she : 'The dear little creature is that poorly, he will scarcely touch the daintiest morsels.'

'Yes marm ; most probable,' I said. 'But when I bring him back to you, his 'ealth will be so restored and his happetite so satisfactory that he'll eat dry bread with a relish.'

Well sir, she agreed to pay me a very liberal sum for curing him ; and I brought the dog home here and clapped him under one o' them tubs, and left him there all night with nothing to eat, but plenty of clean water. Next morning I threw a lump of bread in ; and when I went the next day, he hadn't touched a crumb of it. But the next morning it was mopped clean up ; and I gave him a fresh supply—but only dry bread, mind you, and clean water every day. Well sir, in a week the dog had cured hisself, and could breathe freely once more, as they say. But I kept him another week, just to earn my money, you know. Her Ladyship had told me to call now and then ; so I did, and told her how he was going on. But I didn't tell her he was living under that tub fed on bread and water, because though it sooted the dog admirable, it wouldn't a' sooted her Ladyship to know it. When I took him home, I kept him under my arm until her Ladyship came into the room and then I set him down.

'Floss !' she cried out, 'why Floss ! it's never you ! O you dear little pet !' And the dog frisked and bounced about like a india-rubber ball, and barked and wagged his tail as brisk as anything. Then I took a piece of bread from my pocket and threw it on the floor ; I'd given him nothing that morning, you know.

'Now you watch him, if you please, marm,' I said just as

I threw the piece down ; ‘ see how he ’ll relish this bit of bread.’ And the little span’l bolted it eagerly and asked for more.

Well, her Ladyship was so pleased that she gave me a five-pound note over and above my charges ; and I said thank you very much and good-morning. I was just going out through the door when she called me back. ‘ O Mr Spill, I forgot to ask you. Are you quite sure the dear little pet has been well washed ? ’

I couldn’t help smiling a bit, sir, as I answered her : ‘ O yes marm ; I warrant you he ’s been well tubbed ! ’

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## CHAPTER IV.

### A DETECTIVE HOAXED.

WE were performing at Reading, a comparatively small town, where everybody knows everybody, and news, especially dreadful or mysterious news, spreads at a rapid pace. Detective Blank, a most zealous man and important officer in Reading, was a constant visitor at our circus both before and behind the scenes. Now Detective Blank had an all-consuming desire to distinguish himself ; but whether because of the innocence of Reading folk, and the consequent rarity of crime, or from some other cause, he had never been fortunate enough to be concerned in a great criminal case, though it was well known to the good people of Reading that he had a strong ambition for such distinction, and was always busy poking his nose into any trumpery affair that turned up, if there happened to be about it the faintest approach to a mystery. Some of the men belonging to the



circus put their heads together, and determined that this meddlesome industry of the zealous detective should be temporarily exercised upon a promising case.

Our tent was erected at a spot where the street passed over a canal by a low bridge, the canal itself running at the back of the circus. An old box was obtained, and filled with brick-ends and other rubbish; the lid was securely fastened down with about a dozen long screws, driven in as tightly as possible; and when it was nearly dark, two men carried it on to the bridge while no one was passing. Then, waiting till two or three people were approaching, the box was thrown over the parapet, falling with a loud splash into the water below. The men at once took to their heels, easily escaping in the dark. The anticipated result followed. The passers-by who witnessed the affair and saw the men run off, at once communicated the mysterious occurrence to Detective Blank, knowing full well that he would spare no pains to ferret the matter out. Early the next morning those attached to the circus, who were of course in the secret, were delighted to see three or four boats crowded together by the bridge, each boat containing two or more men, all of whom were busily engaged in poking and scraping and raking about in search of the mysterious box. At the head, and directing the searchers, was Blank, full of importance. Our men of course questioned him artlessly as to the meaning of it all; and most mysterious were the winks and gestures which accompanied the equally mysterious observations, jerked out occasionally as he watched the flotilla at work. He was 'on the track safe enough this time;' there had been foul play somewhere—murder, and he could pretty well guess who was at the bottom of it,

At last, after an industrious search, which, according to the usual fashion of Blank and some other clever people, had been begun on the wrong side of the bridge, a heavy box was brought to the surface and secured. That was a proud moment for our detective, for all Reading had flocked to the spot, and had its many eyes upon him—and the box. A cart having been procured, the box was placed carefully in it; and Blank jumped up after it, to mount guard over his treasure. A crowd followed the cart to the police station, and remained outside to learn the upshot of the affair. The circumstances of the case were briefly reported and entered in the book in due form. The detective was important and reserved; the Superintendent dignified and solemn. In a tone of authority, he directed that the box should be at once opened in Blank's presence. But no one had a screw-driver; so a constable was despatched to borrow one. The screws were large and long, and the wood was hard. After much crouching of the screw and grunting of poor Blank, one of the dozen guardians of mystery was extracted, and placed carefully away to furnish a 'clue.' Another followed; the perspiration dropping off Blank's excited face. And so one by one the screws were got out; and as the barrier between mystery and curiosity became weaker so did the mystery appear greater, and the excitement grow more intense with every extracted screw.

At last the lid is free, and Blank hurriedly lifts it from the box, exposing the contents to view. The reader can imagine the scene which followed much better than I can describe it. Indeed, I should only weaken the effect in the reader's mind by attempting to depict the blank speechless consternation of all present, the utter confusion that fell

upon poor Blank ! It was quickly perceived that the whole affair had been a planned hoax at the detective's expense, and the laugh went against that busy-body for a long time after. But the cream of the joke has yet to come. The hiring of a number of boats and a body of men for the best part of a day—to say nothing of a cart—involves considerable outlay. During the day a 'bill of costs' was handed in to the Superintendent, who, however, laughed at the idea of *his* being responsible for the expense, and referred the men to Blank, who had employed them. Whether they ever got their money, is a point upon which I have no information.

#### A REAL 'PROPERTY' BABY.

One night during the performance of a pantomime at Leamington, in which William Ginnett took the part of a clown, a curious hitch occurred. At the moment when that ever-mischievous individual had to run on to the stage with a baby, supposed to have been stolen from some perambulator, which said baby is then thrown violently at the policeman as he rushes in, staff in hand, the dummy, or as it is termed, 'property' baby, was nowhere to be found. It so happened that a woman was standing near the ring door with her baby in her arms at the moment when William Ginnett came for his dummy. Seeing that it was not forthcoming, he at once snatched the baby from the woman's arms, and rushed with it to the ring. The woman thinking, no doubt, that her child would be subjected to the same rigorous treatment that the dummy has to undergo, was for rushing pell-mell after the clown ; her struggles to do so when we restrained her being at once

laughable and touching. I assured her that the baby was as safe in the clown's arms as in her own ; and in the end that proved to be so. Ginnett tossed the baby up and down, and made pretence to throw it at the policeman, but handled it as tenderly as a woman could have done. Cheers and roars of laughter arose from the audience when they discovered that the clown had a real baby in his arms ; and a recall had to be complied with before the child was finally handed over to its anxious mother. Many of us regretted that we had *not* allowed the woman to rush in after her baby, as it certainly deprived the audience of a passage-at-arms rarely to be witnessed on any stage !

A NEW 'CANTERBURY TALE'—THE TOWN-CRIER IN TROUBLE.

Towards the close of 1861 I arrived at Canterbury, to make preparations for a series of performances in that city. The individual with whom I had to negotiate both in his public and private capacity was a local celebrity of the name of O——, who, besides being bill-poster, town-crier, and official servant of the Mayor, was a general manager of other people's business as well as his own. Possessed of an unshakable faith in his own sagacity and infallibility, he was fully convinced that nothing in Canterbury could go right unless *he* had a finger in it. He was indeed a most important man, *the* most important man in the city. Without him, not even the Mayor himself could have rightly fulfilled his functions or exercised his civic sway. Indeed, it is quite an open question whether his Grace the Archbishop himself was not in some way indebted to the omniscience of the town-crier. Be this as it may, I must freely confess that his services were necessary to me in making my arrange-

ments, both in choosing the ground for our performances and in billing the town and suburbs with our placards. Having brought this business to a successful issue, we repaired together to the parlour of the *Horse and Jockey*—our headquarters during our stay in Canterbury—to cement in a friendly glass the compact into which we had entered. Now, this same O——, town-crier, bill-poster, and Mayor's factotum, was fond of a 'glass and gaiety,' and when duly inspired by his potations, the spirit of boasting was strong upon him. In addition to O—— and myself, there were two or three others in the parlour; and presently the conversation turned upon circus matters generally, with a digression respecting conjurers and their tricks. My friend began to depreciate the cleverness of these men; their tricks were easy enough—he could do any of them himself. We listened good-humouredly to his assertions; and nothing more would have come of them, had it not happened that two policemen, not belonging to the town, just then entered the room. As a matter of course, O—— at once questioned them as to their business; and we were informed in reply that they had brought a prisoner from Chartham, a town some four miles distant from Canterbury. The valiant town-crier was mightily tickled at the idea of any one submitting to be led captive by two such men as they were.

'If you tried to take me along like that,' said he, 'you would find you had a slippery customer to deal with.'

'But we should handcuff you,' replied one of the constables.

'Handcuff me?' exclaimed the boaster with a derisive laugh—'handcuff me? And so you might! D'ye think

I'm not as clever as any of your tuppenny conjurers? I've seen *them* slip the bracelets off easy enough, and I'll bet any man a gallon o' beer that I can do the same.'

The bet was arranged. One of the policemen produced a pair of handcuffs, and these being placed upon O——'s wrists, were shut to with a snap. Beginning his efforts with a smile on his face, the good man wriggled and twisted and turned about in the most comical manner imaginable; first sitting, then standing, then sitting again; getting exceedingly hot and flustered, and red in the face, and finally being obliged to own himself beaten.

'Here, you!' he cried. 'I won't try any more. Undo 'em and take 'em off.'

'We can't undo them,' replied the officer drily; 'we've no key with us.'

'No key?' exclaimed the town-crier in dismay. 'Then what the mischief did you put 'em on for?'

'Oh,' replied the constable with perfect composure, 'you said you could take them off yourself, so we thought it was all right. It's not our fault if you can't.'

'Well, what's to be done?' inquired the poor man, beginning to feel very uncomfortable.

'Why, you'll have to come along with us to the police station; the Superintendent has a key.'

'What!' shouted the town-crier, with a sudden access of outraged dignity, as he shook his pair of fists at the officer — 'what! You expect *me* to walk through the streets with *these* things on?'

'There's no help for it,' was the comfortless reply; 'unless you think the Superintendent is likely to come to you.'

The civic functionary was by this time in a terrible state of mind ; the bare idea of having to walk through Canterbury with handcuffs being sufficient to overwhelm him with a dreadful horror. I suggested that the policemen might walk on a little ahead, while he could follow them with an air of unconcern, and carry his arms across his breast in such a manner as to conceal the offensive 'bracelets' from view. This idea was adopted. The two officers started for the police-station, and O—— walking in the rear with as great an air of dignity and superiority as he could command, arrived there a little after them, and entered composedly. I followed on myself to witness the result, for I guessed rightly that the joke was not yet played out. After inspecting the handcuffs, the Superintendent declared with a solemn shake of the head that his key would not open them ; adding : ' You will have to go to Chartham to get them unlocked.'

It is impossible to picture the look of intense dismay that answered this announcement. ' But can't some one go and fetch a key from Chartham ? ' was the old man's piteous appeal.

' We can't wait here two or three hours,' said one of the officers, ' while a key is being fetched ; and besides, they would not let a key leave the office. You've got to come along with us, and that's the end on it.'

' O lor ! ' exclaimed the victim ; ' what will the people say when they see me ? '

' It's getting late, and we must be off,' replied the policemen.

And to cut the story short, off they went, a four-mile march to Chartham, the town-crier handcuffed, and the two



policemen with him, the poor man falling far short of his boast, that he 'should prove a slippery customer to deal with.'

The most absurd rumours were very soon afloat in the town and neighbourhood, to the effect that the poor town-crier had committed this, that, or the other offence against the laws of the land, and had accordingly been taken to the lock-up. It may be easily imagined that he was led a pretty life for some time after by his fellow-citizens ; but by degrees the incident was forgotten, save by a few ; and now the old man, who is still alive, laughs as heartily at the affair as any of the people to whom he may chance to recount it.

#### THE CONJURER AND THE HARROW BOYS.

I will now relate the circumstances under which I commenced a tour in company with a noted conjurer named Wellington Young. Passing through Harrow one day, with my thoughts intent upon the possibility of doing a little business there, I learned, to my surprise, that no public entertainment had been given in the town for upwards of two years. This arose chiefly from the fact that the Assembly Room, which was old and in a ruinous state, had been pulled down, and a new one had not yet been erected. My idea was that a good conjuring entertainment would be a great attraction in the town, and would certainly be patronised by all the Harrow boys in a body, if they were allowed to come. With this project strong upon me, I proceeded to learn whether any suitable building existed near enough to the schools, and was informed that there was a large empty barn by the road-side a short distance from the centre of the town.

Satisfied with the appearance of the place, I made my bargain with the proprietor contingent upon my obtaining the head-master's consent for the attendance of the boys, and at once proceeded on that errand. Dr Vaughan, lately of The Temple, and now Dean of Llandaff, was then head-master of Harrow. Arrived at his house, I gave the liveried servant my card; and was ushered into a luxurious apartment, furnished throughout in the best style, the little odds and ends that lay about betokening most plainly the polished and thoughtful taste of the scholar and gentleman. Presently Dr Vaughan entered the room, and without any further knowledge of me than my bare name, came forward and shook hands with me with the hearty grip of a man. I hastened to state who I was and what was my business, prefacing my explanation with an apology for the mistake he had evidently fallen into, probably through supposing that I was the parent of one of the boys. I mention this incident, not so much to boast of the real honour of shaking hands with a man of Dr Vaughan's personal merit and well-deserved position, but rather that I may testify to the extreme courtesy with which he treated me, under circumstances which for men of less real worth would have proved very embarrassing. Having mentioned to the Doctor that I had recently given an entertainment at Harford Grammar School, by permission of his brother there, who had afterwards expressed his entire satisfaction, Dr Vaughan readily gave his consent to my request that the boys might attend; and having thanked him, I withdrew.

I at once set about my preparations. The day was fixed, notices were placarded about the town; a pianoforte was hired, and the services of a very skilful young lady-pianiste

secured. The next thing was to procure my conjurer ; and with that object in view I paid a hurried visit to a certain locality in London, where conjurers are as thick as banks in Lombard Street or book-shops in Paternoster Row. It was here that I engaged with Wellington Young, a man well known all over the kingdom ; and the engagement led to his accompanying me on my provincial tour. At Harrow he was announced as ‘ Monsieur Bosco.’

The day arrived ; all my engagements were complete and satisfactory. The hour had come for the commencement of the day performance for the boys, and all I wanted now was to see my audience come trooping down the road towards the barn. The doors had been open some time, and a few of the townsfolk had dribbled in. But my great hope, the lads, had not yet put in an appearance. My heart began to sink into my shoes at this threatening prospect of an empty house. Presently one solitary boy came round the distant corner with a quick swinging step ; a few yards behind him were two more ; then came a group of four or five ; and presently a little army of my juvenile patrons swarmed down the hill, and quickly filled the barn. I was now as elated as I had previously been downcast. Sharp at the appointed time, my pianiste came upon the platform, took her seat at the instrument, and commenced a lively piece. At the same moment, the boys, who of course were out for a ‘ lark,’ began throwing oranges at her ; at such a rate too that I should think a boxful must have been used up in this way. Not being able to appreciate favours of this description, the fair performer escaped hurriedly from the scene, and amid loud cries for ‘ Monsieur Bosco !’ that gentleman came upon the platform. Another demonstration from the boys greeted his

entrance. Amidst the din of many voices might be heard individual remarks such as, 'Oh, you old villain!' or 'Where's my money, you thief?' &c. &c. This reception, at first inexplicable to me, was afterwards made clear when I learned that my conjurer had very recently given a private performance before those very boys in one of the school buildings, and had exercised his ingenuity in a manner that did not entirely please some of his audience, who now recognised him. But Monsieur bowed and smiled, and smiled and bowed again, until he had conjured away all the discordant elements of his reception, and then the performance began, and was carried through to a successful close.

Among my audience was one young lad of noble birth, with whom I had a long chat, a lad of quiet, intelligent ways, and showing much mature thought, for one so young, in the many questions he put to me. He is now Marquis of Bute.

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## CHAPTER V.

### BEGGARS IN BROUGHAMS—A PAUPER TREAT.

MY memories now transport me to a far-distant and different town, Hanley in the Potteries. While there with the circus, I made the acquaintance of Mr Taylor Ashworth, Chairman of the Board of Guardians; and during our conversation one day, the question of a treat for the paupers was discussed between us. Mr Ashworth was much pleased with my proposition, but he added: 'Stoke Union is a good three miles away from here, and the great majority of the

paupers are either too young or too old to walk that distance. How can you get over *that* ?’

It certainly was a drawback ; but after thinking the matter over, I said : ‘ If I can provide a sufficient number of vehicles to convey them both ways, I presume I have your consent to go on with my arrangement ? ’

‘ Certainly,’ replied Mr Ashworth. ‘ And after the performance is over, I will find them all something to eat and drink before they return to Stoke.’

As there were about seven hundred inmates, men, women, and children, to be provided for, I had imposed upon myself no slight task ; and it was necessary to set about it at once and briskly too. I commenced my quest with those gentlemen who, I thought, would most readily consent to lend me their vehicles, and once having a good list of promises, I got along famously, the charitable object in view pleading powerfully for me. It was not long, therefore, before I was in possession of promises for an ample supply of broughams, landaus, phaetons, gigs, and open traps of all kinds from all the leading gentry of the district ; among others, from Mr Lichfield, Mayor of Newcastle, and Dr Hayes, physician to the Duke of Sutherland. In addition to those thus obtained from private sources, we had omnibuses, cars, and cabs from the various owners of such vehicles. In each case, definite instructions were given as to the precise time at which the driver was to be at the doors of the workhouse.

The day arrived. At the appointed hour, an immense array of vehicles of every description blocked the road for a considerable distance right and left of the entrance ; and it caused some trouble to reduce them into starting order. It was arranged that the children should go first, and the

adults follow. The rear of the procession was closed by myself, riding in state with an old lady who had never seen the outside of the workhouse for twelve years, and whom the matron had confided specially to my care. Arrived at Hanley, I shall never forget the unexpected reception which greeted our procession. The entire population had turned out to meet us ; and the cheers that burst from the dense crowds, as each vehicle passed by with its load of their poorer brethren, were such as it did one good to hear. The old lady who rode with me was particularly moved by the stirring scene ; so full indeed was her heart with childlike pleasure and emotion, that, finding no readier way of expressing her gratitude, she must needs insist upon embracing me in the most demonstrative manner, before a delighted multitude of cheering spectators ! Each juvenile upon passing into the building was presented with an orange and a bun ; each adult received a packet of tobacco or snuff. Respecting the entertainment itself, nothing need be said, except that the delight of the children and the old folks too was more than sufficient reward for all the trouble that had been taken.

After the performance was over, the entire body was marched into the town-hall, hard by, which had kindly been placed gratuitously at our disposal for the evening by the Mayor, Colonel Roden. Here the paupers found an abundant spread awaiting them : good rich cake and milk for the youngsters ; bread and cheese and beer for the old people—as much of each as they could eat or drink. For this glorious winding-up of their outing, the feasters were indebted to Mr Taylor Ashworth, who had displayed the greatest liberality and genial kindness of heart throughout.

As the medley array of vehicles deposited the poor people once more at the workhouse gates, the day's treat was over. But the pleasant memories arising from it helped to cheer their sad and uneventful lot, and afforded to both young and old an unfailing topic of talk for months afterwards.

THE PRINCE OF WALES AT HANLEY—PAINFUL NEWS.

While at Hanley, I drove over to Trentham Hall, the seat of the Duke of Sutherland, to ask his Lordship if he and the Duchess would honour our circus with a visit. With his usual condescension, the Duke received me very kindly; and in answer to my request informed me that they were expecting the Prince of Wales for a short visit in a few days' time; and not only promised that the Duchess and himself would attend, but stated that I might safely reckon upon the presence of his royal guest as well. This was indeed good news, and I returned elated with the successful result of my journey. Special arrangements were immediately commenced in order to do full honour to our august visitors. The decorations were overhauled, flags and banners placed in readiness, the 'Royal Box' prepared, and some very nice programmes printed in gold and blue and red upon a satin ground. Everything that we could do was done. The eventful day arrived; and in order to clench the undertaking that the Duke had made me, it was arranged that we should follow his Royal Highness to the Hall, and obtain a confirmation of the promise that had been given in his name. A pair of horses were harnessed to an open carriage, in which Mr Newsome and I drove to the station. Arrived there, we found hundreds of vehicles, whose occupants, hearing of



the expected arrival of the Prince, had gathered together from the district for miles round, to see and welcome him. Mr Newsome alighted and passed into the station, in order to learn at the earliest possible moment that the Prince had actually arrived ; thus enabling us to take our place early in the long file of vehicles which would follow on to the Hall. The train steamed into the station ; our expected guest stepped from the saloon carriage in which he had travelled ; ringing cheers greeted him, and were heartily acknowledged ; and then we all scrambled into line, and followed as well as the crush of carriages would permit. Arrived at the Hall, a card was sent up at the earliest opportunity, and we waited patiently for the response. Should any of my readers consider that we were a little too brisk and pressing in this affair, I would submit that nothing pleases the leading members of our royal family so much as promptness and alacrity in the arrangement or management of all matters in which they are personally concerned. 'Business before pleasure' is with them a guiding maxim ; and to find others business-like around them, materially lightens the burden of the large share of public duty they are always so willing to perform. An answer was shortly sent down to us. The Duke was sorry to have to inform us that a telegraphic message, announcing that something of a very painful nature had happened to a member of the royal family, had reached the Hall shortly before the Prince's arrival, and necessitated his immediate return to town.

We came back to Hanley oppressed with this painful news, though unaware of its nature. But soon the tidings of the catastrophe flashed with lightning speed throughout the length

and breadth of the land ; and the entire nation heard with an indignant thrill of the dastardly attempt upon the life of our Sailor Prince, the Duke of Edinburgh, during the visit he had made to our fellow-subjects on the distant shores of Australia.

COMING OF AGE OF THE MASTER OF LOVAT.

Lord Lindsay, eldest son of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, resides, or did reside, at the beautiful estate of Haigh Hall, near Wigan. In the year 1868, when we had been in the town of Wigan some eight or ten weeks, we heard that Ludovic, Lord Lindsay's eldest son, would shortly attain his majority ; and the people of the district were in high hopes that the celebration of the event would take place at Haigh Hall. In due time intelligence came to hand that it had been decided to hold the festivities there, and that preparations for the event on an elaborate scale had already been commenced. The details of the arrangements were soon known in the neighbourhood. We learned that the festivities would be held on three successive days—one for the peasantry and poorer tenants, one for farmers and shopkeepers, and the grand day of all for the nobility and gentry who were invited to take part in the proceedings. Jennisons, the well-known fashionable caterers of Manchester, were to find everything for the hundreds of guests, gentle and simple, with the one exception of butcher meat ; and this was forthcoming in unlimited quantities from the estate itself. Games of all kinds were provided ; and illuminations, fireworks, and the various attractions and diversions appropriate to an occasion of this nature had been duly arranged.

We were also informed, among other items, that a former

Lord Lindsay, a great lover of horse-racing, had constructed a capital racecourse in a part of the Park adjoining the Hall, well adapted for the purpose, and offering excellent positions for a large number of spectators. It at once occurred to me that if we obtained permission to hold an equestrian fête on the racecourse, it would furnish a very notable addition to the attractions already provided. Upon discussing this with Mr Newsome, the question arose, To whom should we apply? Lady Lindsay, we heard, had just arrived at the Hall, and we knew there was nothing like going to headquarters. But then we were fully aware that her Ladyship had given general instructions to the steward, and had left all arrangements in his hands. Now this same steward happened to be a frequent visitor to the *Victoria Hotel*, which being immediately opposite the circus, was a convenient house of call for myself and other members of the company. The steward being a most important man in these parts, and holding himself, as well as his office, in no slight esteem, looked down upon 'those circus people' with undisguised contempt—in other words, he snubbed us. Could we then expect much favour at his hands? We thought not, and decided not to give him the chance of refusing us. Putting a pair of spanking horses to the carriage, Mr Newsome and I started for the Hall, and requested the favour of an interview with Lady Lindsay. This being granted us, we preferred our request in person, pointing out that we considered ourselves in a very good position to materially add to the attractions of the fête. Her Ladyship thanked us for our offered services; but regretted that, as the superintendence of everything had been left entirely to the steward, who had already made ample provision in the way of amusements, it

would not be convenient for her, even if desirable, to interfere in any way with his arrangements. We hastened to assure her Ladyship that we did not presume to question the excellence or completeness of the steward's arrangements as far as they went. But it would be impossible for him to provide an entertainment at all approaching in character to what we could give, without incurring an outlay of two or three thousand pounds; whereas we, being on the spot with our entire company of picked performers and a numerous stud of trained horses, were well prepared to do justice to the occasion at a comparatively small cost. After further consideration, her Ladyship asked us what we could do for five hundred pounds; and together we sketched out a tempting programme, comprising flat-races, hurdle-races, Roman-car races, hippodrome performances, and a host of novel equestrian feats. Her Ladyship seemed pleased with the projected entertainment, and ultimately engaged our services for the principal day of the coming festivities.

At the appointed time we repaired with the full strength of our company to Haigh Hall, where we were most kindly received by the hero of the day, the young nobleman who had just attained his majority. Accompanying him were the butler and the head-groom, to take instructions respecting the bestowal of ourselves and our horses, and our bounteous treatment during the day. In effect he said, after Hamlet, 'Will you see the *riders* well bestowed?—Do you hear—let them be well used.' And certainly the young Master's injunctions were liberally observed; for while we ourselves were feasted upon the best of everything, our stud was also well stabled and cared for until the time for our departure came.

The day's sports passed off brilliantly—triumphantly, without a breakdown of any kind ; and we had the satisfaction of being assured that our part of the proceedings was by no means the least appreciated by either host or guests. The Master owed to the unbounded pleasure he had experienced in witnessing our outdoor sports ; and we afterwards received an autograph letter from Lady Lindsay, expressing the great satisfaction our performances had given her.

#### TURNING THE TABLES—AN EXODUS AVERTED.

A curious practice had obtained in Wigan for some years, and its annual recurrence came round during our stay there. It was the custom of the entire population (or close upon it) to make a general holiday of one summer's day ; and instead of spending their holiday and their money in their own town, all the good people cleared off by early morning train, lavishing their earnings at a distance, and returning to Wigan late in the evening, too late at all events to come to the circus.

My friend Mr Jonathan Hallam, landlord of *The Three Crowns*, in discussing the approaching festival with me, complained of the loss thus inflicted upon the trades-people of the town ; indeed it touched his pocket, and his interests and ours were thus identical.

I said to my friend : ' We must not let them go.'

' That 's all very fine,' replied Mr Hallam. ' But how are you going to keep them here ?'

' We must try what can be done,' I answered ; adding after a little reflection : ' I suppose you have various benefit societies in the town—Odd-fellows and the like ?'

' O dear, yes ; any quantity of them. There are Odd-fellows

and Foresters and Shepherds, and trade societies of all sorts. What about them ?

‘ I’ll tell you, Mr Hallam. These societies must take it into their heads to make a grand “walking-day” of the coming holiday ; a monster procession must be organised ; and Mr Newsome must be asked to allow his company to join the procession with their horses and band ; and then the town must be paraded with banners and flags and music ; and I’ll warrant you won’t find many folks leave the town *that day*.’

Mr Hallam at once approved of the idea ; and being a gentleman of considerable influence, and well known in the town, he set to work in the proper quarters to initiate the movement, and to make it public by means of advertisements and placards.

On the appointed day, the streets of Wigan began at an early hour to assume a decided holiday aspect ; but it was at first uncertain whether the bulk of the pleasure-seekers were bent upon wandering forth, as in other years, to spend their holiday in other towns, or staying at home to witness the unwonted scene of the grand procession. But as the day wore on, a universal bustle was observable about the streets ; men with a coloured rosette in their button-hole, or otherwise ‘ dressed in a little brief authority,’ were hurrying to and fro, full of the importance of the occasion ; while the rank and file of the different societies soon commenced to troop steadily from various parts of the town towards the spot at which the procession was to form into line. Then the crowds of holiday people began to throng the streets through which we were to march ; and by the time fixed for the start, it was abundantly evident not only that Wigan had stayed at home



to a man, but that hundreds, perhaps thousands of visitors had poured into the town from the whole neighbouring district. The procession started, and perambulated the thoroughfares as arranged beforehand, our company in full parade bringing up the rear, while our band enlivened the proceedings with music specially selected for the occasion. The town held high revel all the day; and when evening came, instead of finding ourselves without an audience, as we certainly should have done without this staying of the yearly exodus, our trouble in connection with the procession was amply repaid by a crowded house.

#### HELEN FAUCIT.

One day while at Wigan, the waitress of the hotel where I was staying came up to tell me that a seedy-looking man was below at the door and wished to speak to me; and upon going down, I found him to be a London actor of the name of Dale, whom I knew to have seen much better times than those that appeared to have then fallen upon him. Having first of all seen to the wants of his inner man, I asked him to explain the causes of the miserable plight in which he found himself. (But first let me state that I knew the man through having seen him act a part in the favourite play of *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*, in which he appeared as the English monarch; while another equally tall and finely built man, N. T. Hicks, a well-known actor, took the part of Saladin. Hicks being a 'powerful' player, was a favourite with the gods; and whenever he appeared, he was invariably recognised by those exalted critics, and saluted with cries of 'Bravo, Hicks!' Hence the sobriquet by which he was afterwards known.) To return, however, to my story. It



appeared from Dale's statement that he had started a theatrical booth on his own account, and begun to work the neighbouring colliery districts. But times were bad ; colliers were on strike and without money, and the state of the theatrical exchequer was anything but flourishing. In this emergency, the most useful members of his little company began to leave him ; the venture was irretrievably ruined ; and poor Dale, after honourably paying off his debts, found himself absolutely penniless and friendless. In this emergency he wrote to Mrs Theodore Martin—more widely known to the general public as Miss Helen Faucit—and explained his position to her. By return of post a letter of sympathy was received from the kind-hearted actress, and with it a cheque drawn and signed by her husband. Dale judged that now certainly he was out of his difficulty, and should be able to tide over till he found work. But his troubles were not yet over. Dale tried at various shops and other places to change the cheque ; but in vain ! His woe-begone appearance told against him, and made people suspicious of the genuineness of the document he held, or of his title to it if genuine. Thus the cheque—Theodore Martin's cheque !—went begging all over the town of Wigan ; while as for poor Dale, seedy of garb and feeling hunger's pinch, 'amid profusion still he pined ;' until at length he chanced to apply personally to my friend Mr Hallam, who at once sent him round to me. I gave Dale the amount of the cheque ; and the poor fellow went on his way, rejoicing at this happy termination of his troubles.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ‘RAISING THE WIND’—A RED INDIAN AT LARGE.

THE following exciting incident occurred while we were at Brighton—exciting, that is for the crowds who witnessed it, but rather amusing to the few who were in the secret. One day while I was standing in the shop of Mr Phillips our printer, and chatting upon various local topics, in came Mr T——, and joined in the conversation. This gentleman had once been a well-to-do hotel-keeper in Brighton, but had been unfortunate ; and at this time owned a small beer-shop in an unimportant street close at hand. At the date of which I am speaking, it had become the rage to make a ‘draw’ at taverns and beer-shops by various strange devices, such as dressing the barmaids in ‘bloomer’ costume, or hiring men of gigantic stature to serve behind the counter as barmen. T—— was complaining of the badness of trade, and appealed to Phillips to try and think if something could not be done to make a novel attraction—something that no one else had tried. Several ideas were mooted, and found impracticable. At last I suggested a North American Indian in full war-costume and well tattooed. T—— jumped at the idea at once ; but—where was the Indian to be found ? ‘Oh, I’ll find the Indian,’ cried Phillips, turning to me, ‘if you’ll find the dress.’ ‘I’ll find the dress then,’ I replied. Thus the matter was arranged ; Phillips also undertaking to print and distribute some placards, to draw public attention to the ‘stranger’ in their midst. The Indian chief was quickly forthcoming, arrayed in the picturesque garb of his race, the head-dress of enormous feathers being of course a prominent

feature of the costume. The plan succeeded admirably. Numbers of people flocked in to see the 'Red Indian,' who jabbered away in an outlandish tongue, interspersed by an occasional word or two of broken English; and T—— had the satisfaction of witnessing a good increase in his profits. But the novelty of the thing soon wore off, and not only that; it began to be whispered among the habitués of the place that this man in feathers was no Red Indian at all—that his skin was as white as any man's in Brighton—that the tattoo marks were painted on—that, in short, the Red Indian was one of Phillips' men 'got up' for the purpose. Again T—— was in despair, and sought once more to lay his troubles before his friend the printer. A council was held, and once more Phillips and I went out of our way to try and serve the unlucky publican. Something was to be done which would at once revive the flagging interest, and silence for ever the disgraceful rumours afloat that this wild hunter of the prairies was but a Briton born and bred.

It was a lovely afternoon, and all the wealth and fashion and beauty of Brighton were serenely enjoying their daily stroll in King's Road, the fashionable promenade of the town. Suddenly a heart-stirring cry was heard in the distance, startling the gay and careless crowds from their languid composure. The sound—like a horrible yell with an unearthly echo—was repeated again and again, growing nearer each time. Then a strange form appeared in their midst, dashing along the King's Road at the top of his speed, and recognised by some of the young swells in the crowd as 'old T——'s Red Indian!' Onward he sped, repeating his fearful war-whoop and brandishing a tomahawk aloft—the people scattering right and left as he passed swiftly by. A few yards in

the rear, were about a dozen men following in hot pursuit—the foremost armed with a long strong rope. Thus the race continued for more than half a mile along King's Road, causing the greatest consternation to the fashionable throng, till at last a stalwart policeman, regardless alike of the terror-inspiring war-cry and the death-threatening tomahawk, sprang upon the flying man, and in spite of his terrific struggles, held him till his pursuers, of whom I was one, came up to assist. We at once bound his arms to his sides, and made ourselves responsible for his safety; the policeman, who knew us, being nothing loath to relinquish his weird prisoner into our hands. A full, I might almost say an exaggerated account of the whole affair appeared in the papers next day; the result being another sensation for wonder-seekers, another influx of visitors to T——'s shop, and another good lift for T—— over his troubles.

Soon after this I left town, and do not know precisely how matters fared with the Redskin, or how long he served behind T——'s counter. Perhaps he is now chasing the bison in the boundless prairies of the Far West, or tracking the grizzly bear to his den in the wilds of the Rocky Mountains. Or perhaps, scorning such tame pursuits as these, he is setting up, or printing, or placarding, a flaming, red-hot poster announcing to the good people of Brighton some new and startling sensation.

#### HENRY BROWN, THE CLOWN—A ONE-SIDED ACQUAINTANCESHIP.

While performing at Brighton, we had Henry Brown as one of our clowns; not a 'tumbling,' only a 'talking' clown. In his younger days, Brown had been a first-class 'tumbler;' but increasing years had rendered him somewhat more

rotund than is convenient for a person who, as Charles Dickens somewhere says, has to 'tie himself in a knot and then untie himself;' and he now confined himself to somersaults of wit and repartee, at which he was no bad hand. At the time of which I am writing he was tall and of a portly build, and a very gentlemanly looking man as far as I could judge of him in his clown's attire and painted face. As ring-master I saw him and talked with him every day in the ring; but he was always dressed and off before I came out, so that I never knew him but as a clown.

Leaving Brown just at this point, I must introduce a person whose acquaintance I had formed as follows. In my daily walks for the past two or three weeks, I had regularly met a gentleman in the street, who if going in the opposite direction to myself, would invariably stop for a few moments' chat; or if in the same direction, would accompany me on my way for a short distance, the topics of our conversation usually being the weather, local news, politics, and other equally original subjects. Looking upon him as perhaps a visitor to Brighton, or perhaps an inhabitant of the town, who had recognised me through going to the circus, it struck me as something not quite in accordance with human nature that he never once mentioned one word of circus matters or made any reference to myself as connected therewith. From his appearance—of commanding stature and somewhat stout, dressed with scrupulous care from the crown of his shining hat to the toes of his well-polished boots—he might have passed muster for a prosperous retired merchant; but there was a calm gravity in his face and in his demeanour which spoke of clerical sobriety of thought and quietness of life,

and made me more than half inclined to look upon my acquaintance as a dissenting minister. Hence, while his conscientious scruples forbade to discourse upon the frivolities of a circus, his brotherly love impelled him to converse with the manager thereof, perhaps in the hope that he might wean me from such paths of wickedness! One morning I had paid a visit to the Mayor's house on business connected with the circus, and had not gone many yards from the door when I met my mysterious friend. 'Fine morning,' he said as I approached.

'Beautiful,' I replied.

'How did you get on with the Mayor?' he then asked. (He must have seen me come away from the house.)

'The Mayor?' I answered in the tone of one who was not quite certain what a 'Mayor' might be.

'Yes—the Mayor,' he echoed. 'You have just been to his house, haven't you? Wasn't he at home?'

'Oh yes; he was at home,' I replied. 'But—you'll excuse my saying it—my business with the Mayor was of a private nature—connected with the circus.'

'Precisely so,' coolly answered my companion. 'That's just why I thought myself entitled to ask. But it's of no consequence.'

'Confound the fellow!' I mentally exclaimed; adding aloud: 'Well, you must pardon my rudeness; but really, sir, I fail to see in what way my employer's business can concern *you*.' This seemed to stagger him a little; and how the dialogue might have ended I can't tell, had I not at that moment, as I looked him full in the face, noticed a peculiar twitch or twinkle of the eyelid, and recognised the man. It was Brown the clown!

I at once apologised, and explained that up to that moment I had not had the faintest notion who he was.

‘Pray, don’t apologise, my dear fellow,’ he replied; ‘but, considering that for the past fortnight you and I have stood face to face in the ring, and rattled away on terms of the greatest intimacy, I could never have dreamt you didn’t know me!’

#### JOINING THE STAFF—A VOLUNTEER ANECDOTE.

Before quitting Brightonian themes, I will record an amusing incident which befell a worthy gentleman there who has since figured prominently and honourably in the history of the town. It was the occasion of my benefit at the Pavilion, and I had gone to the house of Dr—afterwards Sir John B—— to solicit his patronage for the evening. Dr B—— was a man of wealth and position, and was well known in that celebrated watering-place. He was connected with the Volunteers, and had attended the first great Volunteer Review held at Brighton, a year previous to my interview with him. It was in connection with this Review that the incident I am about to relate occurred. After promising me his patronage—no slight favour, let it be said—the Doctor asked me if I had seen anything of Mr Newsome lately, or if I had heard anything about his—the Doctor’s—borrowing one of that gentleman’s horses the year before. I replied that I had not. Dr B—— then narrated the following laughable occurrence, and I repeat it as nearly as I can recollect it in his own words.

‘The great Review was near at hand, and it was imperative that I should accompany my regiment on horseback. Well, you know, I am but an indifferent rider. Not but



what I can stick on to my horse well enough ; but as this was to be a grand affair and fashionably attended, I had a pardonable desire to stick on gracefully, and to be quite at my ease amid all the warlike din and confusion. In this emergency I applied to Mr Newsome, whose circus was then in the town, and laid my troubles before him.

“ I have the very horse to suit you,” he said ; “ a splendid creature, quiet as a lamb, and as easy to ride as a rocking-horse.”

“ That will just suit me,” I replied ; and it was arranged that on the morning of the Review the horse was to be brought round.

‘ The day came ; and my proud charger—his name was Napoleon—in splendid trappings was brought round to the door. Wasn’t I elated ! I knew I should take the shine out of a few of them that day ; and I did. Having mounted my steed, my wife and friends witnessed my departure, and I was soon serenely trotting towards the rendezvous of my corps. You should have seen the people stare as I passed along. When I arrived on the ground, I was the chief attraction of everybody, and the envy of my brother-officers. There wasn’t a single man among them mounted as I was. My horse was a magnificent creature !—splendid action ; full of life ! He couldn’t have been prouder if I’d been a field-marshal. Newsome told me he would be easy to ride ! and so he was ; it was like sitting in an arm-chair rather than being on a horse. Well, the Review passed off all right, and my horse showed admirable coolness at the volley-firing and the blare of the trumpets ; that of course was natural enough for a trained circus horse. But during the march-past at the close of the Review, I happened to be

stationed not very far from where the generals and others who had been reviewing us had taken up their position—a brilliant staff, their scarlet coats rendered still more conspicuous and glaring by contrast with the sombre uniforms of the civilian troops. My horse became uneasy, and appeared impatient to join the group ; but I restrained him without difficulty. Presently, however, just as I was off my guard, the entire staff made a sudden movement from the spot, and galloped rapidly to a distant part of the field. In a moment, my horse, as though seized with some irresistible impulse, bolted off at full speed after them. I tried to pull him up, but in vain. He 'd got his head, and I 'd lost mine ; and presently I found myself right in the midst of a formidable array of generals, and army colonels, and foreign officers, to my great trepidation and dismay. Some of them turned round in their saddles, and looking with a supercilious air over their shoulders, appeared to wonder what in the name of fortune I was rattling after them for. Soon, however, the party made a halt, during which I succeeded in persuading my horse, by the aid of spurs and whip and hard words, that I was not in my proper place, and that the sooner he took me to it the better for him.—When I told Newsome all about it next day, he very coolly remarked, with a merry twinkle in his eye : “ I don't feel surprised, Doctor. Nap's my favourite hunter ; and when he saw the scarlet coats galloping off, he mistook them for the 'field,' and was off after them. You don't get Nap to keep far behind, when there's business about, sir ! ”

The Doctor laughed quite as heartily as I did myself, as he recounted to me the ludicrous adventure which had thus somewhat dimmed the glories of the earlier portion of this

eventful day. Since then, Sir John has been Mayor of his town, and I do not doubt that he was one of the most popular Mayors Brighton ever had. To his generosity in private, hundreds can testify ; many indeed were the poor creatures who, while benefiting by his professional skill, were at the same time recipients of his bounty. To his munificent liberality in public, all Brighton, to say the least, can bear witness.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SCOTT CENTENARY.

I HAVE now to deal with an episode in my life upon which I shall always look back with the greatest pleasure and not a little pride. The centenary celebration of the birth of Sir Walter Scott was about to be observed, as an event of national importance for Scotland. Very properly indeed, the celebration was promoted by Scotchmen ; and with a twofold fitness, it was held in Edinburgh, the birthplace of the great novelist and poet. A Committee was formed, and a great banquet arranged, at which not only might Scotchmen do honour to the memory of their famous countryman, but literary celebrities from other lands as well might assemble to pay homage to his great genius. The Earl of Dalkeith was elected Chairman of the Committee, and of the banquet also ; while for Vice-chairmen there were the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the Lord Justice-General, Lord Jerviswoode, and Sir William Stirling-Maxwell. Mr T. Usher acted as Hon. Secretary, and Mr George Scott as

Hon. Treasurer. The Committee sat daily during the preparations for the coming event.

In addition to the proposed banquet, the various places of amusement had made arrangements to observe the day in an appropriate manner ; the theatres, for instance, producing dramatised versions of some of Sir Walter's tales. But the Committee soon found themselves face to face with an unforeseen difficulty, one with which they were quite unable to grapple. It arose in this way. Not only was the event to be celebrated abroad by the great writer's admirers in every civilised country throughout the world ; but it soon appeared that from these same countries, far and near—more especially from our colonies and the United States—Scotchmen were coming by shoals to visit the capital of their country and take part in the national festivities. But what festivities were there for them when they should arrive ? There was the banquet—there were the theatres ; but what were they among so many ? This was the difficulty that presented itself ; and the grave question, what was to be done to entertain the expected guests ? was seriously discussed by the Committee, by the press, and by the public in general. The nearest approach to a solution of the question was the suggestion of a Trades Procession through the streets of Edinburgh. But the celebration happening at the holiday season of the year, added to some other difficulties or objections, prevented the idea from being adopted.

At the period with which I am dealing, Mr Newsome's circus had already been performing for some time in the town of Edinburgh, when my services were engaged as Manager ; and I—being at the time in London—imme-

diately started for the north. On my arrival, I heard of the 'fix' in which the Centenary Committee found themselves, after the Trades Procession had been abandoned; and I immediately pondered over the matter, in the hope that some scheme would occur to me. The idea of a procession of some sort seemed good; and turning the matter over in my mind, it was not long before a definite programme suggested itself to me. Keeping my intentions to myself, I repaired to the rooms where the Committee held their daily sittings. Having sent in my card, I was shortly ushered into the presence of the half-dozen notables mentioned above, who received me very politely, and requested me to make known my business. Without any beating about the bush, I at once stated that I had heard that the Committee were in a dilemma in connection with the approaching celebration; and that if my information were correct, I had a suggestion to submit to them. The Chairman said that I had been rightly informed that they *were* in a dilemma, and that any suggestion I might make would receive their full consideration. I then unfolded to them my plan. My proposition was to organise a grand procession composed entirely of characters drawn from one or more of Sir Walter Scott's novels, dressed in appropriate costumes, and in every way representative of the period chosen. My suggestion was well received by the Committee; and Mr Ballantine, the poet, who happened to be present, was so pleased with the proposition, that he started up and shook me warmly by the hand, declaring his conviction that I must be a Scotchman myself.

The main principle of my plan being thus accepted,

I went at once to Mr Newsome, to communicate my ideas to him and talk the matter over. Having sketched out a programme together, I returned to the Committee to lay a definite offer before them. *Kenilworth* was the work chosen for the occasion ; the particular episode we intended to illustrate being a visit of state made by Queen Elizabeth to the castle which gives its name to the novel. The Maiden Monarch herself was to be accompanied by all her courtiers, a hundred beef-eaters, and a host of other retainers, with flags, banners, and music—all in exact accordance with the period represented. The Committee were delighted with the programme, and expressed their entire approval of the proposed arrangements. The subject of payment was then mooted, by the Chairman ; and that gentleman having explained that the funds at his disposal were limited, and the extent of his outlay rather uncertain, I at once proffered our services to the town free of cost, knowing full well that Mr Newsome would readily indorse my action in that respect.

A telegram was at once forwarded to Messrs May, the London theatrical *costumiers*, to send down to us with all speed the necessary costumes for the characters, together with complete outfits for one hundred beef-eaters. One hundred supernumeraries were engaged and drilled for the occasion ; and when the beef-eater costumes arrived, a full-dress rehearsal of the procession was held on the day before the celebration, in and about the circus buildings at Low Broughton. After the rehearsal, each man having brought with him, by my instructions, a large handkerchief or wrapper, folded his clothes up carefully, made them into a bundle, and placed them where he might find them on the



following morning ; thus avoiding any cause of confusion and delay in attiring for the procession.

The eventful morning dawned brightly over Modern Athens, and every one was early astir to prepare for the day's work. Her Majesty (Madame Newsome) and her courtiers were already on the spot ; the beef-eaters and others arrived in good time ; and our preparations made rapid progress. It was announced in the morning papers that the procession would start at eleven ; and when that hour arrived, we were in readiness. At the head went the full strength of our band, attired in sixteenth-century costumes, and playing airs of an antique martial character ; these were followed by a portion of the beef-eaters and other retainers ; the remainder of whom brought up the rear. The most attractive part of the procession was the long array of noble lords and ladies—forty in all—attired in their handsome and characteristic costumes, mounted on gaily caparisoned steeds, and surrounding their beloved sovereign, Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth, who, for splendour of attire and queenly presence, was done ample justice to in the person of Madame Newsome. Her Majesty was mounted on a superb cream horse, of pure Spanish breed, named Tavernaro, led by two grooms in the costumes of pages, one on each side. (The noble animal was so full of spirit and life, that the foam from his mouth and flanks ruined the costly robe in which Madame Newsome was attired—a contretemps which was certainly not in the programme !)

Thus formed, the pageant procession started, and wended its way slowly through the winding picturesque streets of the quaint old town ; the band heading it and filling the



air with the lively clangour of clarion and trumpet ; while the gay, bright-coloured dresses of the retainers, the banners and streamers floating overhead, and the splendid costumes of the mounted courtiers, rendered the entire scene a most brilliant and heart-stirring spectacle to look upon. A gentleman who had witnessed the progress of the procession from a good position on the Castle Hill, told me afterwards that the appearance of the cavalcade as it wound along through the crowded streets in the bright sunshine, was romantic in the extreme. He had felt as though carried back three hundred years in a dream, to find himself surrounded with all the delightful realities of bygone days.

To sum up : the procession not only met with very kindly praise and glowing descriptions in the London and provincial papers ; but even across the Atlantic, the press gave us credit for the result of our labours. Nor was this our only reward, as the sequel will show.

Three years had passed since the incident just related, and again I was in Edinburgh, making arrangements for the advent of our circus for a long stay there. As I passed through the centre of the town, I observed a large vacant space where some houses had been pulled down, in Chambers Street, just opposite the Museum and College ; the finest position in the town for our tent. Upon making inquiries, I learned that all the leading circus proprietors had applied for this site and been refused ; as it was too central and, I suppose, too select to be used for such purposes. However, I went to the Chairman of the Streets Improvement Committee, in whose hands the matter lay,

and applied for the site. He was very sorry, but it was impossible to oblige me ; the site had been refused to all other circus proprietors, and he could make no exception in our case. I then ventured to remind him of our services to the town three years before, by which the community was enabled to do fitting justice to the memory of the great novelist. ‘We gave our services gratuitously,’ I added, ‘and spared neither trouble nor expense to insure success. I think, therefore, that we have some little claim upon the town.’

The Chairman recollected the circumstances perfectly, and admitted that what I had urged did certainly alter the case. He would bring the matter before the Improvement Committee, and let me know the result.

It was not long before I was informed that the Committee, ‘bearing in mind the great services which Mr Newsome had rendered to the town at the celebration of the Scott Centenary, had great pleasure in placing the piece of ground at his disposal ;’ subject of course to certain conditions, already agreed upon at my interview with the Chairman. I wish to record here, that in granting us this site, Edinburgh repaid us well for past trouble and expense. The excellent situation added materially to the success of our season there, and altogether Scotland’s grand metropolis used us very kindly.

One more point. The reader is aware that we obtained the site through having done honour in his own ‘romantic town’ to Sir Walter Scott. Well, I afterwards discovered that on that very site once stood the house wherein Sir Walter Scott was born !

## CHAPTER VIII.

ADA JACOBS AS 'RICHMOND'—A CLIMAX TO A TRAGEDY.

ON one occasion I was acting the principal character in an equestrian adaptation of *Richard III.*, in which every arrangement had been made with the view to a grand striking display at the close of the piece, immediately after the encounter between Richard and the Earl of Richmond, in which the monarch is killed. About forty horses and a body of supernumeraries representing the rival armies are massed within the ring, forming an imposing *tableau*. The dead king being then thrown across a horse, the procession winds slowly out. The fight commenced. My fierce and relentless opponent Richmond was represented by Miss Ada Jacobs—once famous as Mazeppa—who, after a long and terrible passage of arms, thrust her cruel blade between my left arm and my side, and I fell to the ground as dead as Julius Cæsar. My eyes were closed; but I heard the tramp of the horses' hoofs as they entered the ring, some of them coming unpleasantly close to my head. I was wishing that they would not come quite so near, when suddenly a foot came down firmly upon my chest. I struggled over and sprang up—I, the dead monarch!—and in doing so, well nigh upset my opponent Richmond, who to add an unrehearsed feature to our *tableau vivant*, had set her foot upon the breast of her fallen foe! The reader may imagine the burst of laughter which greeted this absurd conclusion of a highly tragic display; nor was the merriment confined to the audience, for the performers joined most heartily in it; though they knew that for a moment it had given me a

terrible fright. However, 'Richard was himself again' with a vengeance, though at the wrong part of the performance; and his humble representative had proved anew the truth of the adage, that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

#### SISTER'S PARTING GIFT.

Had I space at my disposal, I might recount many little incidents to show how thoroughly the advantage of mutual help is appreciated by actors and equestrians as a class, and to what extent their belief in its efficacy is put into everyday practice among them. The following example, however, is highly characteristic, and will serve well to illustrate my meaning. One of our apprentices, Miss Polly Abbott, a clever and graceful rider, was the fortunate possessor of a beautiful mass of long, silken, dark-brown tresses, of which she herself was justly proud, and others less favoured were unjustly envious. Miss Abbott's younger sister having obtained an engagement with Hengler's circus, and being on the point of departure, Miss Polly asked and obtained leave of absence in order to see her sister safely off by train. On her reappearance amongst us, she was scarcely recognised. Her long wavy tresses were all gone, and nothing but a very short crop remained.

'What on earth have you been doing to yourself?' I exclaimed.

'Had my hair cut a bit—that's all,' replied Miss Polly with a little laugh.

'So I perceive,' I answered. 'But why have you had it cut so short?'

'Well,' she replied, 'you see my sister's taken this place

at Hengler's ; and she's got no hair herself worth speaking of, so I've given her mine—just to help her to make a more presentable appearance.'

MARTINI, THE 'MAN-MONKEY.'

Many years ago, a novelty was offered to the wondering public in the shape of a so-called 'Man-monkey.' The name is misleading ; for instead of this specimen being a monkey having some resemblance to a man, it was, on the contrary, a man endowed with the activity and nimbleness of a monkey, and in addition, imitating the tricks and peculiarities of our poor relative. The remarkable agility he displayed in running up poles, &c., and leaping about from point to point, as a monkey does in his cage, was in itself a sight worth seeing. As years rolled by, Martini dropped the 'monkey,' and ultimately became an equestrian agent, or middle-man between proprietor and performers. At the present time, these agents are plentiful enough ; but Martini had it almost all to himself, and thrived accordingly. Notwithstanding this, he was a man of unpretending appearance and extremely simple habits. His 'office' was 'situated' at the front of the bar of the *Pheasant* public-house in Standgate, near to the Westminster Bridge Road, in which immediate neighbourhood equestrian and other artistes were thickly congregated. Here then, at the bar of the *Pheasant*, he transacted all his business, engaging men for masters, and finding masters for men ; his contracts when signed, sealed, and delivered being usually celebrated in a drink. The question being asked in some form or other : 'What would he take to drink ?' 'What did he fancy ?' or, 'What was it to be ?' one stereotyped answer

invariably came from Martini : 'Two without.' And these twopenny nips of gin, which came pretty frequently during the day, with an occasional nibble of plain dry bread, constituted for several years the whole of this man's aliment. Nothing else would he touch. Once indeed, when he was complaining of feeling weak and ill, I took him to task on the score of his diet, and told him that he ought to take more nourishing food. I persuaded him to come along with me and have some oysters. He ate one or two ; and it happened that a few days afterwards he was taken seriously ill, and that this illness terminated in his death. The poor fellow repeatedly assured the people about him that his illness had been caused by eating those few oysters ; they had been far too nourishing for him, and more than his system would stand !

#### TREASURE-TROVE—A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.

A peculiar circumstance occurred to me once while I was at Cheltenham. It was Whitsuntide, and I had organised a grand fête with special attractions, to take place in a cricket-field just outside the town. The chief feature of the day was to be the roasting of a bullock whole, in which I had had considerable previous experience. I therefore prepared drawings of the necessary structure, and gave full instructions to the caterer how he was to proceed. But after waiting some time, I found that no one had begun to construct the fireplace ; so I determined to start the men at the work myself. Calling to one of them to bring a pick-axe, I pointed to the spot where he was to begin.

'Now drive your pick in just there,' I said, 'and loosen the earth a bit.'

Down went the pick into the loose soil ; up came the lumps of earth, and with them what looked like some pieces of old iron, corroded with age, and with the earth firmly adhering to their surface. There were three or four at this first pick, and the man put down his tool to examine them.

‘Never mind them !’ I cried impatiently ; ‘for goodness’ sake, get on with the work.’

As the man proceeded, more of the same articles were unearthed, until at last a dozen in all were discovered, and thrown aside to be examined afterwards. But Percy, one of the caterer’s men, happening to come by at the moment, picked them up and examined them ; afterwards offering the workman half-a-crown for the lot. This the man accepted ; and Percy took the articles, whatever they were, away with him. I thought no more of the incident until a day or two afterwards, when a couple of policemen called upon me, and began questioning me in a most mysterious manner about some treasure-trove that had been discovered in the cricket-field by some men who were working with me. I replied that I knew nothing about any treasure-trove. I knew some bits of old iron had been turned up, and that was all. Where they were then, or who had got them, I neither knew nor cared. I suppose that as far as the police were concerned, the matter dropped. But I heard afterwards that these dozen pieces of ‘old iron’ turned out to be what are known to collectors of curiosities as ‘apostle spoons.’ They were of solid silver ; and each had upon it, as a continuation or elongation of the handle, an upright figure of an apostle—the twelve spoons together furnishing the twelve apostles. They were decidedly cheap at half-a-crown the lot.



## A DOCTOR IN SPITE OF MYSELF.

Driving with my man along a rather unfrequented road from Warrington to Lymm in Lancashire, I observed at a little distance ahead a group of women collected in the road, up and down which they appeared to be casting anxious glances. Presently, they appeared to have espied us, and were pointing in an excited manner towards us. Then they beckoned wildly with their naked arms—and such arms!—to other groups of women standing about, who immediately rushed to the spot. It may appear that I am a coward, if I confess that I was somewhat alarmed. I knew what Lancashire women were; that if they got a notion into their head, nothing but superior force would turn them from their purpose; that if—to suppose a case—these women had imagined, through mistaken identity or false information, that I had in some way injured them, they would have horsewhipped or duck-pounded or killed me first, and inquired into the merits of the case afterwards. But coward or not, I drove on towards them, slackening my pace as I approached the group, but showing no signs of an intention to stop. The women put up their hands, beckoning me to pull up; two of them rushed to the horse's head and seized the reins; and then we found ourselves surrounded by a gesticulating and jabbering mob of bare-headed, bare-armed, wooden-shod Amazons, their faces betokening an immense amount of excitement, but nothing worse.

‘Well, my good women,’ I exclaimed as calmly as I could, ‘what do you want? what can I do for you?’

They all answered together, as I should judge from the clamour of tongues; but they all replied to the same effect,

in their broad Lancashire dialect : ' We want you to give us something that's good for whooping-cough.'

What a strange request ! I replied that I supposed they mistook me for a doctor. I was very sorry, but I could not help them, or I would.

' Oh, but you must !' they all sang out, with an emphasis that quite unnerved me.

' Well, but I can't !' I replied with equal vigour.

This parleying went on, until my man quietly said to me : ' Write 'em something down ; it'll most likely satisfy them ; anything will do.'

I adopted his suggestion, determined to be a doctor for once in my life, even if only a quack. Alighting from my trap, I repaired with the entire army to a little roadside inn a few yards away, and called for pen, ink, and paper. I then wrote down a kind of prescription, directing that eighteen grains of rhubarb were to be made into four pills and administered to the sufferer.

The poor ignorant creatures were as delighted at my action as I was perplexed at theirs. They thanked me, invited me to ' have a drink,' and were in every way as ' pressing'ly hospitable, as they had before been apparently hostile. They accompanied me back to my trap, and wished me God-speed as I drove away. Still wondering at this strange adventure, I arrived at the hotel at Lymm, and narrated the whole affair to the landlord, who at once furnished me with an explanation. He had seen me drive up to the door with my piebald horse, and through that, was ready with the interpretation. There was in those parts, he informed me, a superstition that if a traveller were met driving a piebald or skewbald horse, and were asked to give or recommend some-

thing that was good for the whooping-cough, whatever he gave or recommended would be an unfailing remedy for all the children round about that were suffering from that complaint. Such is the belief indeed of these simple folks up to the present day.

TAKEN IN THE WRONG 'SPIRIT.'

Whilst staying at an hotel in the Eastern Counties, I made the passing acquaintance of a commercial traveller—an important man in his own conceit, and familiarly known as 'Sir Roger de Coverley.' Respecting this individual, some quaint stories were afterwards told me, which I might have felt justified in putting down as mere gossip, had not their probability been amply proved to me by the manner of the good gentleman himself during my short stay in his company. He was a persistent and systematic bragger—not confining himself to generalities, or speaking of bygone matters, where refutation of his assertions might be difficult, if not impossible; but boasting openly, and to any one who chose to listen to him, of all such matters as would tend to increase his importance in the eyes of others; making statements without reference to their truth, or to the possibility of his lies being found out. Say, for instance, that the conversation turned upon pictures. 'Ah,' quoth Sir Roger, 'if you want to know what a private collection ought to be like, you should see *my* gallery. Finest specimens of the Old Masters, and the leading men of the modern schools. Cost me thousands of pounds; and I could have ten times what I gave for some of the pictures. Why, only the other day Agnew offered me five hundred pounds for a little bit of Turner's that cost me only thirty-five guineas;' &c. Or it

might chance that wines formed the subject of discussion, and then there was more big talk about his 'cellars,' and 'choice vintages' and 'rare wines worth three guineas a bottle,' and sundry other trifles. When at a good distance from his house—which was at Bradford—he would put a clencher to his boastings by inviting some stranger, whom he had previously ascertained by artful questions to be quite sure not to accept the invitation, to come and see his pictures and taste his wines. On one of these occasions, a gentleman thus invited repeated the polite promise that so many others had given, that if he should chance to be in Bradford, he would do himself the pleasure of looking in. Time went by ; the gentleman happened to be in Bradford, and he 'did himself the pleasure' of hunting up the address given him. After some inquiries, he was referred to one of a row of small houses in a very second-rate suburban street, which, however, turned out to be the right place. Mr Blank was not at home, but his wife was ; and when her visitor informed her that he had been invited by her husband to call and inspect his picture-gallery, the good woman exclaimed : 'Picture-gallery ! Lor' bless you, sir, we've got nothing but a few prints hung up in the parlour !'

These and other tales respecting this individual were told me after I had met him. On the evening in question, there was no one in the room but 'Sir Roger,' a dissenting minister, and myself. The usual dose of brag respecting his own affairs having been administered to us, he then proceeded to learn all about his two companions. (I must mention here by way of parenthesis, that this happened at a time when, owing to successive failures of the grape-crops in France, French brandies had risen considerably.) Having told him

as much of my business as I thought proper, the inquisitive fellow turned to the minister with the question : ‘ And what line might *you* be in, sir ?’

The gentleman replied with a quiet smile : ‘ Oh, I am in the *spiritual* line.’

‘ You don’t say so !’ answered the loquacious man ; adding in a sympathetic tone of voice : ‘ What a confounded price brandy has gone up to !’

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ORIGINAL OF DICKENS’S ‘ SLEARY.’

OLD Jack Clarke, a notability in his way as a circus proprietor, was, I have good cause to believe, the model who sat for ‘ Sleary’ in Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times*. Many of Clarke’s personal characteristics are faithfully pictured in that character ; and the physical defect of his gruff asthmatic voice, though not quite turning the *s* into *th*, so nearly produced that effect, that no combination of type could represent it better than that which the great novelist adopted. On one occasion, I was riding in company with Clarke from Reading to Oxford, when he commenced speaking of a few of his misfortunes, finishing up with the direful results of his short stay in the town he had then left. ‘ I’ve juht given three performanthes in Reading, and lortht nearly two hundred poundth by them. It ’th a fact, thir.’ I was not aware that Clarke ever had so much money as that to lose ; so I expressed my surprise, asking him how he had managed to do it. ‘ Well, you thee, thir, when I came to the plathe, I made my calculathonth that the firht evening’tl performanth would produth a hundred poundth, and the

nectht two nightth we thood take at leatht fifty poundth a night ; that'th two hundred poundth in all, thir. Well, you'ld thcarthely believe it, thir, but we only took twenty-thickth !'

#### THE BEAUTIFUL PAULINE.

Some time ago I met Tom Fillis the clown, and after an exchange of greetings, expressed my surprise to see him look so thin and miserable.

'Enough to make any one thin and miserable,' he said in reply, 'to go through what I have done lately. I've been doing a tour with old Snuffy J——'s proprietary company [a kind of co-operative undertaking in which the members, instead of receiving a fixed salary, share the profits in certain proportions agreed upon], and have had a nice time of it. Sharing the profits indeed ! We had to share the losses, more like, and live on nothing a week or near to it. The tent was pitched alongside a turnip-field once, and we thought a bit o' thinning would do the crop good ; so we set to work to help the farmer after our fashion—kept our pot boiling some time, I can tell you. But it's poor work living on turnips, even when they *are* to be had cheap. Do you remember old J——'s missis ? She's marked a good deal with small-pox, and squints horridly. But for all that, she'd take leading ladies, young or old—didn't matter which to her. Once, one of our regular customers asked us to play *The Lady of Lyons*, so we brought it out. Mrs J—— took Pauline, while I appeared as Claude Melnotte. I sha'n't forget that night in a hurry. There was a parcel of lads in the audience a bit up to their larks ; and you know how handy youngsters are at picking out any peculiarities in

others. Well, we got to the place where I am supposed to see Pauline coming, and have to announce the interesting fact. Just at the moment that she was standing at the wings ready to come on to the stage, I spoke my line—

“See where she comes—the beautiful Pauline!”

and smiled rapturously upon the missis as she entered. For a moment all was attention; but just then a young scamp sang out in a stage-whisper: “Lor’, ain’t she a lovely creetur!” and then all the boys chimed in, and a pretty chow-row they kicked up all the while, first one and then another of ’em. I was precious glad, I can tell you, when the thing was over and the “beautiful Pauline” took herself off.’

#### A SEA ADVENTURE OFF SOUTHAMPTON.

In the spring of 1865, after a most brilliant season in the Royal Pavilion Riding School at Brighton, our circus proceeded to Southampton, where we occupied the building erected in the previous year by Mr Charles Hengler. Here an incident happened to me, upon which I cannot even now look back without a shudder at the narrow chance by which I escaped with my life. I had suggested to Mr Ginnett that the boys of the Training Ship, which was lying about three miles distant up Southampton Water, should be invited to visit a performance at the circus gratis. This proposition being agreed to, it was decided that Mr Bruin, the agent to our establishment, should accompany me on the first favourable opportunity; the sea at that time of the year—March—being usually very rough. After a few days’ delay, a bright sunshiny morning, almost free from wind, tempted us to try our fortune on the deep; and off we started towards the



hiring station for boats. Arrived there, I handed Bruin half a sovereign, telling him to make the best bargain he could. Now, Bruin was always known as a close-fisted fellow, and good at making a bargain; though in this instance his exceeding cleverness in this direction nearly cost us our lives. Leaning on the railings, I watched my keen friend's interview with the group of old salts who had surrounded him, until when my patience was nearly exhausted, he shouted out: 'It's all right—come along!' The by-standers shipped the oars and sails; Bruin and I took our places; the boat was shoved off into the water, and in jumped a young fellow who had undertaken to convoy us to the Training Ship and back; a mere stripling, and not at all *my* idea of a sailor. But that was only a passing thought; and off we went. The tide was running with us; and any one who is familiar with the swiftness of the current in this narrow sea, will understand my surprise at reaching our destination—a distance of three miles—so much sooner than I had expected. 'It's all nonsense to call *this* three miles,' I exclaimed.

'Wait till we're coming back again with the tide against us,' replied Bruin; 'you'll find it long enough then, I'll warrant.'

We arrived at the ship. The captain received us very kindly; and we explained the object of our visit. After accepting our offer with many thanks on the boys' behalf, the gallant officer invited us to partake of some refreshment before our return. When we came on deck again, the lads were put through some of their manœuvres, which they executed with cheerfulness, promptness, and skill. On being again mustered, the captain explained to the lads the

purport of our visit—an announcement which was received with ringing cheers. After cordially thanking the captain for his hospitality, we descended the companion-ladder, at the foot of which we found our boatman impatiently waiting our return ; for a brisk wind had sprung up, and the weather altogether looked very nasty. We immediately started ; but after an hour's hard rowing, we seemed to have made but little headway ; so I suggested that as the wind was astern, we might take advantage of it and hoist our sail. Our boatman proceeded to carry this suggestion into execution ; but he handled the sail so awkwardly that a gust of wind caught it ; we heeled over to leeward, shipping a quantity of water, and were in the greatest danger of capsizing altogether. At the same moment, one of our oars slipped out of the rowlock, and I only just succeeded in reaching it before it was out of reach. Bruin swore at the youth for his clumsiness ; but for sole response, the poor fellow sang out : ' You must lend a hand, or we shall all be drowned ! ' I know nothing of boating ; but I knew that the wind was too much for us in the absence of any one who could handle the sail ; so I at once hauled it down—how I did, I don't know ; then telling Bruin to take my place at the helm, I took up the oar I had saved, told the boatman to take the other ; and thus, after another hour and a half's hard pulling, during the whole of which time Bruin was baling out water with his deer-stalker, we succeeded in making port ; and very glad we were to find ourselves once more upon terra firma.

It appeared that the sailors, disgusted with the terms Bruin had offered, would have nothing to do with us ; but one of them had agreed to lend his boat to the man who

took us, who instead of being a sailor, turned out to be only a landlubber—an idle tailor !

#### ABOUT CIRCUS MATTERS IN GENERAL.

It must not be supposed that the life of an equestrian performer is all pleasure, or the business of the proprietor all profit. In the career of master and man alike, there are many ups and downs. The successes of each, though arising in a few instances from pure good fortune, are in the main due to diligence, perseverance, and pluck ; while the reverses that occur, sometimes no doubt the result of unavoidable misfortunes, are in too many instances caused by the individual sufferers themselves. Competition between the great rival companies is occasionally very keen ; and it needs one to have all his wits about him to steer safely through the shoals and quicksands on each side and avoid the breakers ahead. Two once well-known circus proprietors, Ryan and Pablo Fanque, although well established in popular favour, succumbed to the internal weakness of a faulty or laggard management ; and each died in the greatest poverty. While it is impossible to avoid the existence of competition, it *is* possible to steer clear of some of its worst results, and make certain of a goodly portion of popular support.

At the close of my description of a tenting tour in an earlier page, I alluded to the keen competition that existed then, in consequence of the stay in England of the powerful American circus of Messrs Howes and Cushing, which consisted in 1861 of four distinct and strong companies, all contending for a share of the public patronage, which would, but for their presence, have belonged to English proprietors alone.

After completing our tour through South Wales, we made direct for Gloucester. Here we found a formidable array of competitors thick on the field. When I arrived as agent in advance for Mr Ginnett, Cooke's circus was already performing in the town ; Sanger's was announced to arrive in three or four days, and Hengler's in little more than a week ! Sanger's had the novel attraction of a live lion on the roof of one of the large vans, crouching at the feet of Britannia, who was armed with a trident and seated on a throne. A striking group they formed. Hengler's had with them a curiosity in the shape of a South American bullock with a huge hump on its back, which, if I remember rightly, they called a Bonassus. Here, then, was a host of opponents.

Not many weeks after, we met Hengler's again under the following circumstances. I was at a place called Haltwhistle in Northumberland, and went to the post-office to inquire if there were any letters for me. The postmaster handed me one ; but upon looking at the address, I found it was for Rivolti, Hengler's famous ring-master, and then agent in advance. I at once returned the letter to the postmaster, who apologised for his mistake. The letter being there, told me that Rivolti himself could not be far away, and that his circus must be close on our heels. Judge of my mortification when I learned that he had taken the town for the very same day that I had ! The result was, that Ginnett's circus, for which I was acting, proved a failure as far as Haltwhistle was concerned. One interesting circumstance contributed to turn the tide of popular favour away from us. During the previous visit of Hengler's circus to the neighbourhood, Mrs Hengler had met with a serious and nearly fatal accident, which necessitated a long stay on her part in the town, to the

principal inhabitants of which she thus became a familiar acquaintance. It is not surprising, then, that many of her old friends, who had sympathised with her illness, should wish to see her once more, and visit the circus.

Referring again to the rivalry of Messrs Howes and Cushing ; this circus appeared once more in force upon the field in the spring of 1870. I was then agent in advance to Messrs Sanger, whose circus is by far the largest and most complete among the ‘tenting’ establishments of this country. Finding ourselves threatened with this formidable competition, Messrs Sanger determined that we must offer the Americans battle, and continue the fight until we had driven them off the road and out of the kingdom. The general arrangements for attaining this result having been intrusted to my hands, I commenced operations by persistently ‘billing’ each and every town taken by them, as though we were coming ourselves on the following day ; it being well known to us that English sightseers frequently wait for the *last* circus, when two or more companies are announced for about the same dates. Our next move was to take all the best towns of the North well in advance of our rivals, so as to quench the thirsters after enjoyment with *our* cup of pleasure, before Messrs Howes and Cushing could offer a draught from theirs. This mode of operation was entirely successful ; and at last, bearding the lion in his den, we appeared side by side with them in Preston—the greatest English and the greatest American tenting companies thus appealing together to a by no means large constituency. On this memorable occasion, showmen came from all parts of England to witness the contest ; two such concerns never having before been seen in one town on the same day.

Our rivals acknowledged that we had beaten them ; and shortly afterwards the Company returned to America.

A difficulty of another kind meets the equestrian manager. It sometimes happens that the presence of a popular favourite in some other branch of public entertainment will mar the success of the travelling circus. Once our company visited Wrexham, usually an excellent circus town. But it happened that on the same day there was a formidable counter-attraction, which caused our performance to be a financial failure. Our competitor for patronage on this occasion was the celebrated actor J. L. Toole, who besides being a brother-freeman of the City of London, was my schoolfellow for about four years, and my opponent in a contest for a much-coveted prize that was competed for by the form in which we both sat. Mr Toole was giving his services at Wrexham in order to raise funds for the repair of some church in the neighbourhood !

Again, the travelling proprietor is open to disappointment through some break-down in his arrangements, arising from an unforeseen and unavoidable cause. A unique instance of this species of annoyance happened within my own personal experience, and I must add, to my own great loss. It will be remembered that a few years ago a troupe of Chinese jugglers came over to England, and astonished us all with their remarkable dexterity in throwing knives and in performing curious and less dangerous tricks. After this Company had appeared for a long season at Drury Lane Theatre, I engaged them on my own account for a long provincial tour. I was of course put to enormous preliminary expenses, for which, however, I expected to be amply repaid before the close of the engagement. We got



through a portion of the tour satisfactorily, meeting with great success and plenty of patronage. But unfortunately for me, this happened at a time when Chinese jugglers or conjurers were not allowed to leave their own kingdom or to remain abroad without the special permission of the Court; and long before the conclusion of my tour the troupe received a summons from the Chinese Emperor to return at once to their native land. This of course quite upset my calculations, and inflicted upon me a heavy pecuniary loss.

A most important item in any well-appointed circus is the valuable stud of highly trained performing horses. Most of these intelligent creatures receive their training and learn their tricks in the circus to which they are attached; but occasionally clever horses are bought up from other circuses, and sometimes exceedingly high prices are given for them. They thus represent not only a large sum of money intrinsically as horses, but are valued at a considerably higher price, which varies according to their cleverness and the number of their 'accomplishments.' Much might be said as to the best method of training horses; but after all, it resolves itself into this: The horse must first be brought to feel that you are his master—his superior; not through fear of your power; but on the contrary, through his experience that though you have the power, it is always accompanied by kindness and by firmness, but *never* with cruelty. Great tact on the part of the trainer is indispensable if he is to succeed in gaining first the confidence and then the obedience of his dumb pupil; especially when we consider that the horse is many times stronger than a man, and is a dangerous animal to deal with when a spirit of resistance is roused within him.



## CHAPTER X.

## TRAITS IN THE CHARACTER OF THE HORSE.

*Rarey the Horse-tamer.*—Every one remembers the advent of Rarey to England, and the perfect furor created by his wonderful feats of horse-taming. It may surprise many to learn that before he came out in this character, Rarey had had no previous experience with horses, and that the lad gained the foundation of his great power over the horse by closely studying the methods that have from time immemorial been constantly practised by the circus trainer. Nevertheless, the power which he exercised over the wildest and most stubborn horses struck every beholder with wonder. Animals which on account of their furious temper had been given up by trainers and grooms as hopeless, were speedily rendered amenable to reason by his subtle treatment. The *fortiter in re* always gave place to the *suaviter in modo*. Rarey never feared a horse, and never gave the animal grounds for supposing that such a sentiment was possible. Introduced into his presence, sometimes at the risk of those who did so, the horse-trainer soon established a friendly footing with his dangerous equine companion. Bidding the astonished grooms leave the animal and himself to their own company, Rarey calmly surveyed his patient, and proceeded to coax and wheedle and stroke first the head, then the neck, and finally the forequarters, until he had in a measure allayed the fears and softened the ire of the animal. This, he termed ‘gentling.’ Next, by a series of quietly executed manœuvres—one of which was the strapping up of the fore-

feet—the biped had the quadruped lying helpless at his feet, subdued and docile enough to permit of the man reclining at full length upon the prostrate horse! After a while the straps were removed, and upon the animal regaining his feet, Rarey would quietly mount and ride him out of the inclosure.

The point of chief importance in the management of a horse is to study his humours and whims; not with the idea of actually giving way to them, but in order to attain the desired end through them. The trainer must not play a hectoring part; he must ‘stoop to conquer.’ Every horse of spirit is nervous at strange noises and strange sights; and equally so at having articles to which he is unaccustomed placed upon his back or neck or head. Let him see all that is going on. *Take him into your confidence.* If he is about to be bridled for the first time, the way *not* to do it is to hold him by the forelock and mane, while you vainly endeavour to force the strange thing over his head. The way to *do* it, is not to seem anxious to do it at all; let the horse see the bridle, and sniff at it; let him know that there is not much harm in it. He will then let you quietly put the apparatus over his head without fear or resistance.

A peculiar method is requisite to make a horse lie down, more particularly if you are a stranger to him. Having accustomed the horse to your presence, having fed him from your hand, and stroked and caressed and ‘gentled’ him, he will look upon you as a friend, and be ready to obey you. A series of little taps upon one foreleg, and he is down upon one knee; the other knee is made to follow. In this position, the horse will submit to be gently rolled over on to his side, almost as though in a trance. Let each act be

gentle and he is content. Once the horse is down, he becomes your slave ; and this first victory may be best confirmed and subsequent lessons rendered less troublesome, by feeding him with some choice morsel while he is down ; or if he will not eat in that position, directly he arises. Do not let your victory have in it any sting of defeat for him. The nearer that the trainer approaches to the spirit thus indicated, the more successful he will be ; and if he wanders too far from it, he will achieve no success at all.

Some years ago, General Airey in the course of a conversation with me, most fully indorsed the above views as to the great power of mingled firmness and kindness. But firmness and kindness *alone*, without a knowledge of horses' temperaments, without great tact and insight into their individual characters, will be of little if any service with extremely stubborn and fractious animals. A proof of this was given by Rarey before General Airey's own eyes. These two gentlemen happened to meet at Mason's livery stables, and a discussion was raised respecting the powers of the American tamer. The General did not believe that Rarey was gifted with any special power ; he was of opinion that if a horse was beyond the influence of combined firmness and kindness, he was beyond our influence altogether. There was in Mason's stables an utterly intractable steed, well known to General Airey, which had never yet been harnessed ; or if harnessed, had resisted all efforts to drive him. He was an irreconcilable. The General said that if Rarey had any special power, he would be able to bring it to bear upon this horse. Rarey at once undertook that he would unaided harness the horse, hitch him to a brake, and drive him up and down Piccadilly. The challenge was

accepted ; the General frankly reiterating his full conviction that neither Rarey nor any one else could do it. But in an incredibly short time Rarey emerged from the stable with the horse harnessed as he had promised, and drove him as quietly as a lamb up and down Piccadilly.

*The Remarkable Memory of Horses.*—It scarcely needs stating that a good memory is indispensable in learning anything. And if a horse has to learn a trick or routine performance, he can only do so by remembering it from time to time of going through it. Both horses and dogs have wonderful memories ; but I will narrate one or two instances relating to the horse.

I was once driving to Long-Milford in Suffolk at a spot where there was a bridge leading over a river. As we approached the bridge, the horse pulled up, and would not move on again without whipping. For some time I was at a loss to account for this freak ; but it afterwards occurred to me that the last time I had crossed that bridge and with the same horse, I had pulled up at that very spot to speak to a man I had met.

Unless there is a reason to the contrary, we always prefer occupying the same field each time we visit a town. Sometimes it happens that the stud-groom, who is generally with the first wagon, forgets which field it is. But by giving the horse his head and leaving him to himself, he will most certainly pull up at the right gate. The groom never finds him to be wrong, and drives straight in.

When in Southampton some years since, I had to pass up High Street daily, and had a different horse almost every day. Whichever horse I had, he would slacken speed at

the *Star Hotel* and want to turn into the yard. Upon mentioning this to the stud-groom, he explained that five years previously, when the circus was in Southampton, the stud had been stabled at the *Star*, and the horses had not forgotten the place again.

*Their Remarkable Intelligence.*—I have my opinion, founded upon close and varied observation, that horses can and do convey to each other very exact intelligence by the various sounds they produce, from the proud, sonorous neighings of a full-spirited horse, down to the whinnys and snortings and other little sounds with which all keepers of horses are familiar. Once, in a long stable containing twenty stalls in a row, a horse at the one end was dying. Near the other end was a horse of a timid disposition, which showed marked signs of dread and extreme nervousness, as though conscious of what was going on; trembling from head to foot, and streaming with perspiration. I feel convinced that intelligence of what was passing had reached this horse, and that being of a nervous temperament, the poor animal had been troubled to the painful extent we had witnessed.

Another example of a different kind. It often happened that I was away from the Company for weeks and months at a stretch; and on some of these occasions I had to return along the road by which the circus was coming, thus meeting the vans one after the other all down the line. When yet there was some distance between myself and the nearest van, my horse would scent or see the head van-horse and salute him with a loud neigh. This would be at once answered by the van-horse, which seemed to pass the signal to the rear

down the line, where it was taken up from horse to horse to the very end, perhaps three-quarters of a mile away. Then as I rapidly drove by and met the vans, each horse would turn towards mine as he passed, greeting him with a friendly and joyous neigh ; apparently holding a short conversation in passing, as though welcoming each other after a separation. For it must be noted that it was *only after long absence* that such demonstrations took place.

*How to Water a Horse.*—On the question of giving a horse water, when to do it and when not, much popular ignorance exists. Every one knows that, ‘while one man can take a horse to the water, twenty can’t make him drink.’ But every one does not stop to think that it is because he is not thirsty that he will not drink. Now, if a horse is given an unlimited supply of water after a long dry run, he drinks heartily, and is in danger of suffering from colic in consequence. The usual method is to let the horse cool down before he drinks. That is very good as far as it goes ; but is a remedy only where a prevention would be far better. When a horse is doing a long distance, offer him water frequently—as frequently as possible without inconveniencè. He will either sip a mouthful or so, or none at all. The instincts of the horse serve the same end as reason in man. Let the horse use his instincts freely, and as a rule he will never indulge to his own injury.

*Sensitive Taste and Smell of the Horse.*—Horses have a quick scent and delicate palate. The least impurity in the water or in the vessel that contains it, will frequently cause the horse to refuse it. A curious incident bearing upon this

point happened some years ago when a London distiller was suspected of conveying a large quantity of spirits off his premises without paying duty. An excise officer had his attention drawn to a horse-trough which was so situated that it might have been possible to run the spirits through it and away in some manner underground, in the night. But professional evidence was adduced to prove that, had such been the practice, horses would never have drunk out of it as they did ; for the odour of the strong raw spirits would have clung to the trough and tainted the water.

Here is an illustration of the natural instinct of the horse when guided by his sense of smell. One of our men had bought or had been given the skin of a lion which had recently died ; and as the circus was just leaving the town, he threw it on to the driver's seat of one of the vans, to have it tanned at the next town. The horse in that van was a very quiet one, that had been with the circus for years. Nevertheless, the animal immediately showed signs of fear, which increased in spite of all endeavours to pacify him. Then, breaking loose from all restraint, he kicked and reared and plunged about in the wildest manner until he had broken the harness and escaped. Various conjectures might be made as to the manner in which the horse's fears were aroused ; but I think it probable that all those creatures which are liable to become the prey of carnivorous beasts, have been endowed by nature with an instinct which enables them to distinguish their foes from other animals.

English equestrians, and their blood-relations from over the water, are by far superior to those of any other nation.

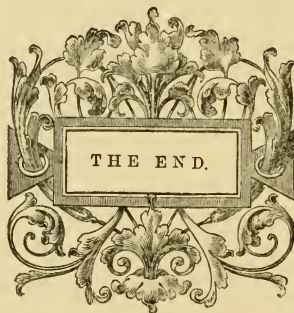


All over the continent, performers from England or the States are eagerly sought for and readily engaged. In fact there is scarcely a foreign circus of any note in which the bulk of the performers are not English artistes. It is curious that, on the other hand, continental circuses are much more important, and on a grander scale than those of England and America. In the first place, most of them have seven days a week, and Sunday the chief of them all, on which to gather in the golden harvest, as compared with six days in England and two or three other countries. Again, they receive in a much greater degree the direct and systematic patronage of the nobility and of royalty itself, thus placing the circus on the same recognised footing as the stage.

Among other sovereigns of Europe, the Emperor and Empress of Austria are great patrons of the circus. When the Austrian Crown Prince was in England in 1878, he chanced to arrive in Glasgow while we were staying there, and honoured our circus with a visit. After the performance was over, the Prince was pleased to express his very great satisfaction with what he had witnessed. Knowing that our Imperial guest was a great admirer of the horse, I asked him if he would like to inspect our stud. Having graciously consented to do so, the Prince with his suite made the tour of the stables, exhibiting great interest in the various horses, and spending three-quarters of an hour in the inspection.

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Comparing the foregoing Recollections to a procession of familiar characters and well-remembered incidents, I feel that I cannot do better than close the array with Royalty in the person of the Austrian Crown Prince ; and having done so, turn to my audience for their generous criticism of the performance as a whole, make my bow, and pass out of the Ring.





RBC

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Recollections of an  
equestrian manager

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